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*Zen*  
FOR THE WEST



Rōshi Daiko Yamasaki when eighty-eight. Teacher of author

# Zen FOR THE WEST

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## Preface

I was invited by the American Government to be a Fulbright exchange professor in 1956-7, and delivered lectures on Zen Buddhism at Washington University, St. Louis, and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Before returning home, I visited England, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, France, Germany, Italy and Monaco, where I gave lectures on Zen and Japanese culture in many cities and towns. That this trip of mine was made possible is evidence that in America and Europe a considerable number of men and women are interested in Zen.

A lengthy 'Profile' of Dr. D. T. Suzuki appeared on August 31, 1957, in the *New Yorker* magazine. Such lavish use of valuable space in a widely circulated magazine would also indicate a widespread interest among its readers. The number of Occidental people who are attracted by Zen in recent years, especially after the Second World War, is by no means small.

Books on Zen Buddhism written by Dr. D. T. Suzuki in English are in many volumes, some of which have been translated into French and German. Introductions to Zen written by Western writers, such as Dr. Eugen Herrigel and Mr. Alan Watts, have already been published. The publisher of the present book, however, seems to think that it might be rather fun to let a Japanese Zen monk who knows a little about the West write an easy handbook of Zen. Could the idea be really good or wrong? Could it be successful or not?

I have borrowed many passages from the works of Dr. D. T. Suzuki, who has been my teacher since my college days. It is my pleasure to express my sincere thanks to him for his generous permission to do so.

Mr. Christmas Humphreys, the President of the Buddhist Society of London, has been extremely kind in many ways to the author. Without his help this book could never have been published in its present form, however imperfect it may be.

*On the Wesakday of 1958.  
Shokokuji Zen Monastery,  
Kyoto, Japan.*

SOHAKU OGATA

## What is Zen?

ZEN is the essence of the Oriental mind, and it is the long formless stream running through the whole of Asia. Its germ of thought is seen here and there in Indian classics such as the Vedas and Upanishads, its body of religion is formed by Mahāyāna Buddhism and Taoism in China, its flower of culture is brought out in China and Japan, and its fruit of applying the principle in daily life is growing in Japan today. It will soon be exported to Europe and America. What then is Zen?

The term Zen comes from 'ch'an-na' which is the Chinese transliteration of a Sanskrit word 'dhyāna'. It signifies the mystical experience in which God and man are one or in which subjectivity and objectivity merge. In the broadest sense it is the origin of all religions, but in general it is used to describe a special type of Buddhism called the Zen or the Buddha-mind Sect. Bodhidharma, an Indian monk who came to China about A.D. 520, is regarded as the founder of the Sect, and his school is known as Sōshūzen or Patriarchal Zen in distinction to Heretical, Hinayāna and Tathāgata Zen.

If religion implies pantheism, polytheism or monotheism and is based on the idea of holiness, Zen is not a religion. For it insists that there is no theism realizable by confirming the idea of holiness. The Master Rinzai who is known as the father of the Rinzai Zen Sect, which flourished in China and is still active in Japan, said.

'O Brethren, the true Buddha is imageless and the true teaching is formless. But you seek them in empty visionary things. Even if you get something from them, they are but the spirits of wild foxes; they are not true Buddhas but are heretical

concepts. Those who are true seekers of the truth must take nothing as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas or arhats, nothing as admirable in the three worlds. They are to be completely independent and not to be concerned with anything. Even if heaven and earth are overturned, I shall never be doubtful [about the truth]. Even if the Buddhas in the ten directions appear [before me], I shall not be pleased; even if the hells suddenly open before me, I shall not be frightened. How can I be free as such? To my observation, things are inconceivable. They exist as [the Mind is] transformed and they do not exist when [the Mind is] not transformed. The three worlds are but the Mind, and the ten thousand things are but the perception. Therefore, both material and spiritual things are like visions in the air; why should we trouble ourselves to grasp them?

'O Brethren, if you wish to grasp the [correct] view on the dharma, be mindful not to be led astray by human temptation. Smash whatever you come across, regardless of whether it is from within or without. Smash the Buddha, patriarchs and arhats, if you come across them; smash your parents and relations, if you come across them. You will be in [real] emancipation for the first time [when you are free from them].<sup>2</sup>

The peasant sage, Tōsui, was a Zen master of the Sōtō School in Japan. One day he suddenly left his temple without a word and mingled with beggars. When he was given a picture of Amitābha Buddha by one of his friends he added the following poem to it:

'However narrow my hut may be,  
You are welcome to take up your lodging there;  
But please do not misunderstand me, O Amittābha,  
As asking blessings from you in the future life.'

As Zen is non-theistic, it has no dogma to accept, and its attitude towards the scriptures is fundamentally different from

<sup>2</sup> *Rinzairoku* or *The Sayings of the Master Rinzai*.

that of other schools of Buddhism and perhaps of all other religions. The following statement ascribed to Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen in China, is most clear on this point

'A special transmission outside the scriptures;  
No dependence upon words and letters;  
Direct pointing to the soul of man,  
Seeing into the nature and attainment of Buddhahood.'

To Zen, scriptures are but the finger pointing to the moon or the ferry-boat in which to cross a stream. Followers of Zen, therefore, never take them as the canon of religious truth.

The Master Hakuin is regarded as the father of the modern Rinzai School of Zen in Japan. He had, besides monk pupils, many lay students including some women. One of the latter once sat upon a volume of the Saddharma-pundarika Sūtra. On seeing this, her father blamed his daughter for her impious deed, but she said, 'Why is it wrong for the Saddharma-pundarika to sit on the Saddharma-pundarika?' When the father reported the incident to Hakuin, to his astonishment he was given the following poem to show to his enlightened daughter:

'On hearing in the darkness the cry of a crow  
which has never cawed,  
How much do I miss my father before he was born!'

Reading the poem, she said, 'The old master seems to think the same way as I do.'<sup>1</sup>

According to Zen the true Buddha must be formless and the true man mindless. The Vajracchedikā Sūtra has been well studied by Zen students since the days of the sixth patriarch, Enō. In its twenty-sixth chapter we read,

<sup>1</sup> *Hakuin Zenshu* or *The Collected Works of Hakuin*.

'If any one by form sees me,  
By voice seeks me,  
He walks the false path,  
And cannot see the Tathāgata.'

It is the spiritual experience in Zen to grasp what is formless, mindless and abodeless. This means to identify oneself with the truth by transcending one's humanity and not to recognize what is external or objective by means of dualistic thinking. This experience of the unification of what is internal and external is called 'satori' or enlightenment in Zen. Satori is the self-awakening of what is mindless. It is the mind of mindlessness. The following story throws some light on what is meant by the mind of mindlessness.

'A wood-cutter was busily engaged in cutting down trees on a remote mountain. An animal called satori appeared. It was a very strange-looking creature, not usually found in the villages. The wood-cutter wanted to catch it alive. The animal read his mind: "You now wish to catch me alive, do you not?" Completely taken aback, the woodman did not know what to say, whereupon the animal remarked, "You are evidently astonished at my telepathic faculty." Even more surprised, he conceived the idea of striking it with his axe, when satori exclaimed, "Now you want to kill me." The woodman felt completely disconcerted, and fully realizing his inability to do anything with this mysterious animal, he thought of resuming his work. Satori was not charitably disposed, for he pursued him, saying: "So at last you have abandoned me."

'The woodman did not know what to do either with the animal or himself; resigned to the situation he took up his axe and, paying no attention whatever to the presence of satori, vigorously and single-heartedly began felling trees again. While so engaged, the head of the axe flew off and struck the animal dead, who with all its telepathy failed to read the mind of mindlessness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture*. (Pantheon Books Inc., for the Bollingen Foundation, Inc., New York.)

The following song of meditation by Master Hakuin gives the Zen view on God and man:

#### HAKUIN'S SONG OF MEDITATION

Sentient beings are primarily all the Buddhas.  
 It is like ice and water;  
 Apart from water no ice can exist,  
 Outside sentient beings, where do we find the Buddhas?  
 Not knowing how near the truth is,  
 People seek it far away,—what a pity!  
 They are like him who, in the midst of water,  
 Cries out in thirst so imploringly;  
 They are like the son of a rich man  
 Who wanders away among the poor.  
 We transmigrate through the six worlds,  
 Because we are lost in the darkness of ignorance;  
 Going astray further and further in the darkness,  
 When can we escape from birth-and-death?

We have no words to praise fully  
 The meditation practised in the Mahāyāna;  
 The virtues of perfection such as charity and morality,  
 The invocation of the Buddha's name, confession and ascetic  
     discipline,  
 And many other good deeds of merit,  
 All these issue from the practice of meditation;  
 Even those who have practised it just for one sitting,  
 Will see all their evil karma wiped clean;  
 Nowhere will they find evil paths,  
 But the pure Land will be near at hand.  
 With a reverential heart, let them listen to this Truth  
 Even for once,  
 And let them praise it and gladly embrace it,  
 And they will be most infinitely blessed.



Those who, reflecting within themselves,  
 Testify to the truth of Self-nature,  
 To the truth that Self-nature is no-nature,  
 Have gone beyond all sophistry.  
 For them opens the gate of the oneness of cause and effect,  
 And straight runs the path of non-duality and non-trinity.  
 Abiding with the not-particular which is in particulars,  
 Whether going or returning, they remain forever unmoved;  
 Taking hold of the no-thought which is in thoughts,  
 In every act of theirs they hear the voice of the truth.  
 How boundless is the sky of unfettered samādhi!  
 How transparent the perfect moonlight of the fourfold  
 Wisdom!  
 In that moment what do they lack?  
 As the eternally calm Truth reveals itself to them,  
 This very earth is the Lotus Land of Purity  
 And this body is the body of the Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

The present time is the age of humanism, in which the human being is the scale of all things. Here his task is to liberate himself from various fetters or bondages. It is a modern characteristic especially in the West, that man is the master of life, in the place of the gods in mediaeval and ancient times. The humanism of the Renaissance freed man from the Jewish and the Christian God; the humanism of enlightenment in the eighteenth century liberated him from political and economic bondage to the ruling class; that is to say, the time of democracy has come; the humanism of the twentieth century turned man from an individual to a socially centred way of living.

Will this socialism, however, liberate man from bondage? As long as he thinks of himself as something confronting the world, it seems impossible for him to be completely free. For the root of bondage or suffering is to cling to the shell of self, whether of the individual or society. A man has a body as well as mind or spirit. The body has form and so is limited,

<sup>1</sup>D. T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series* (Rider & Co.), pp. 336-7.

while the mind is formless compared with the body, and seems to be limitless. The mind in the ordinary sense, however, is considered as something apart from the body. But as long as it can be defined in some way, it is not free from limitation and is under some bondage. In other words, humanism cannot liberate man completely or satisfactorily. In order to be perfectly free, man has to transcend himself, and Zen is the way to transcend everything, including the fear of life and death. When one is completely free from every thing, one is not a thing; hence such terms as mindless, formless, abodeless and so on. These words do not indicate vacuity or lack of content, because vacuity is a thing which contradicts something, that is, a concrete being.

Since olden times in the East, this sort of self-transcendence has been and still is the chief problem of all religions and philosophies. A certain tradition of training the mind for the comprehension of this truth is kept up. In the West, however, such a way of thinking seems to have been regarded as heretical and dangerous. But the history of the persecution of heretics is good evidence of the existence of similar thought. Today, religions in the West seem to be expected merely to serve humanity, which is a sad thing to see. In a way, the West is badly in need of regaining the wisdom she once possessed, which is not the same as intellectual or scientific knowledge. Meister Eckhart, a German mystic in the fourteenth century, is still read by many Western people, and I see much common ground in Zen and his mysticism. He wrote:

"The eye by which I see God is the same as the eye by which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one and the same—one in seeing, one in knowing, and one in loving" (Blakney, p. 206).

"Where did you first find God?"

"When I left all creatures, then I found God."

"Where, then, did you leave him, brother?"

"In any clear, pure heart."

"Who are you, brother?"

"I am a king."

"Of what?"

"Of my flesh: whatever my spirit wants from God, my flesh is more eager and ready to take than my spirit is."

"A king must have a kingdom. Where is yours, brother?"

"In my soul."

"How so?"

"When I have shut the doors of my five senses, earnestly desiring God, I find him in my soul as clearly and as joyful as he is in eternity."

"You could be holy! What made you so, brother?"

"Meditation, high thinking and union with God have drawn me to heaven; for I never could be content with anything less than God. Now I have found him and I am eternally content and happy in him and that is worth more than any kingdom, as long as we continue in time. No pious practice is so perfect that it may not be an obstacle to spirituality" (Blakney, p. 252).

These statements remind us of the 'Song of Meditation' by Hakuin which was quoted a few pages back.

About disinterest Eckhart says: 'I have read much of what has been written, both by heathen philosophers and sages and in the Old and New Testaments. I have sought earnestly and with great diligence that good and high virtue by which man may draw closest to God and through which one may best approximate the idea God had of him before he was created, when there was no separation between man and God; and having delved into all this writing, as far as my intelligence would permit, I find that [high virtue] to be pure disinterest, that is, detachment from creatures. Our Lord said to Martha: "*Unum est necessarium*," which is to say: to be untroubled and pure, one thing is necessary and that is disinterest.

The teachers praise love, and highly too, as St. Paul did, when he said, "No matter what I do, if I have not love, I am nothing." Nevertheless, I put disinterest higher than love. My first reason is as follows. The best thing about love is that it

makes me love God. Now, it is much more advantageous for me to move God toward myself than for me to move toward him, for my blessing in eternity depends on my being identified with God. He is more able to deal with me and join me than I am to join Him. Disinterest brings God to me and I can demonstrate it this way: Everything likes its own habitat best; God's habitat is purity and unity, which are due to disinterest. Therefore God necessarily gives Himself to the disinterested heart.

'In the second place, I put disinterest above love because love compels me to suffer for God's sake, whereas disinterest makes me sensitive only to God. This ranks far above suffering for God or in God; for, when he suffers, man pays some attention to the creature from which his suffering comes, but being disinterested, he is quite detached from the creature. I demonstrate that, being disinterested, a man is sensitive only to God, in this way: experience must always be an experience of something, but disinterest comes so close to zero that nothing but God is rarefied enough to get into it, to enter the disinterested heart. That is why a disinterested person is sensitive to nothing but God. Each person experiences in his own way and thus every distinguishable thing is seen and understood according to the approach of the beholder and not, as it might be, from its own point of view' (Blakney, pp. 82-3).

This seems to be very much like the thought in the following Zen stories:

A monk once asked Hyakujo, "What is the most excellent thing in Zen?" Hyakujo replied, "I sit alone on this great mountain."

Three men were walking along a road leading to a mountain pass, where a man was standing without doing anything. One of them said: "What can he be doing? Can he be waiting for his companions who have not yet arrived?" The second man said, "No, he must be cooling himself in the breeze." The third one said, "I think he is at his wit's end." While thus talking they came close to the man and each asked in turn:

"Have you been waiting for your companions who have not yet arrived? Have you been cooling yourself in the breeze? Have you been at your wit's end?" "No," said the man, "I have been just thus." To be just as one is is the way a man of Zen should be, and it seems to be the same as Eckhart's "disinterest".

'To tell the truth, this light is not satisfied with the unity of this fruitful conception of the divine nature, but I shall go further and say what must sound strange—though I am really speaking the truth—that this is not satisfied by the simple, still, motionless essence of the divine being that neither gives nor takes. It is more interested in knowing where this essence came from' (Blakney, p. 247).

Thus 'knowing where this essence came from' seems to correspond to what is meant in Zen by 'one's original features before one's parents were born'.

Dr. D. T. Suzuki says: 'A little point left by God corresponds to what Zen Buddhists call satori. When we strike this point we have a satori. To have a satori means to be standing at Eckhart's "point" where we can look in two directions: God-way and creature-way. Expressed in another form, the finite is infinite and the infinite is finite. This "little point" is full of significance and I am sure Eckhart had a satori.'<sup>1</sup>

If Westerners are now to study Zen, they should remember Eckhart. They are in need of that higher knowledge won through meditation which they once possessed and which is very different from modern scientific knowledge acquired by reason and thought. For it is possible for Westerners as well as Easterners to achieve that higher knowledge called satori or standing at the little point.

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *Mysticism Christian and Buddhist* (Allen & Unwin), p. 79.

## The Characteristics of Zen Culture

THROUGHOUT the entire Far East of China, Korea and Japan, we see the system of a unique culture which originated in the sixth century, reached its meridian in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and began to decline in the seventeenth century, but which is still kept up in Japan even in this day of materialism and mechanization. It is called Zen culture. In no other age or area do we find anything similar. If we say that all other types of culture are based on 'being', that of Zen may be regarded as standing on no base, on that of non-being. Sir Charles Eliot, the author of *Japanese Buddhism*, says: 'In previous chapters I have touched on the history of Zen in both China and Japan, but perhaps it may not be amiss to point out once more how great a power it has been in the artistic, intellectual and even the political life of the Far East. To a certain extent it has moulded the Japanese character, but it is also the expression of that character. No other form of Buddhism is so thoroughly Japanese' (p. 396).

Again, Mr. R. H. Blyth, the author of *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, says: 'Zen is the most precious possession of Asia. With its beginning in India, development in China and final practical application in Japan, it is today the strongest power in the world. It is a world-power, for in so far as men live at all, they live in Zen. Wherever there is a poetical action, a religious aspiration, a heroic thought, a union of the Nature within a man and the Nature without, there is Zen. But in Japan, where by tradition and training the ego is kept at its smallest and weakest, where every man is a poet and is ready at any moment to die for the Emperor, Zen is both

universally diffused and finds its greatest exemplars at the present time' (p. vii).

The daughter of Kinō Tsurayuki, a famous poet and statesman in the tenth century, sang:

'August is the Imperial request [for the plum-tree];  
But, how can I answer the nightingale's question, "where  
has my nest gone"?'

The Emperor Murakami was once in search of a plum-tree to replace one in front of the Refreshing Palace. Finding an extremely nice one in the garden of the lady, the Emperor's delegate asked for it, but a nightingale had built her nest there. The Emperor, hearing of this, instructed his delegate to leave the tree undisturbed and wrote the poem for the owner. This is the legendary history of the famous 'Ohshukubai' or the plum-tree and the nightingale's nest. The poem is typical of Japanese nature-lovers before Zen was introduced to the islands. Such Japanese instincts were much excited by the coming of Zen from the continent.

'As my bucket is captured by the morning-glory,  
I beg for water [from my neighbours].'

This is the famous haiku by Kaga-no-Chiyo. Coming to her well one morning, the poetess noticed a beautiful morning-glory in bloom which wound round the bamboo pole of her well-bucket, and it never occurred to her to remove the vine for her practical purposes. Her poetic instinct at once asserted itself. Hence the haiku.

Haiku has been typical of Zen culture since Bashō, who is known as the father of this poetry.

Ota Dōkan was a military lord in the fifteenth century who built Edo Castle in 1457. One summer day when hunting in the Musashino Field he was caught in a shower. Walking into a peasant's house by the road-side, he asked to borrow

a rain-coat of the type called mino. The girl who answered this unexpected caller understood what was requested but instead gave him a spray of the yellow rose called Yamabuki. As she spoke no word to Dōkan, he could not grasp what she meant, but when, on returning to the castle, he related the incident to his men one of them said, 'The girl must have had in mind the poem which reads:

"What a pity the yellow rose  
Brings no fruit (mino),  
But its blooms are seven petalled  
and eight folded!"

(The Japanese for both a fruit and a rain-coat is mino.) Feeling ashamed of his ignorance of poetry, Dōkan decided to study it. Years later he was granted an audience by the Emperor Gotsuchimikado. When the Emperor asked him about his residence in Edo, the war-lord was now ready to answer the Imperial question with a poem:

'My hut is on a beach beside pine woods,  
The high peak of Fuji is seen through the roof.'

The Emperor, whose residence was restricted to Kyōto, was curious to know more details. 'How wide is the Musashino Field?' he asked. And Dōkan replied with another poem:

'The evening shower does not cover it entirely;  
The Musashino Field seems to be wider than the sky.'

The Emperor was so pleased at the war-lord's poetic talent that he wrote and gave him a special poem in his praise:

'How much am I astonished to find such a flower of words,  
When I thought the Musashino Field was nothing but  
wild thistles!'



It was in the early Kamakura period in the thirteenth century that Zen was properly introduced to Japan. Many Japanese monks, including Minan Yōsai and Kigen Dōgen, went to China to study Zen, and more Chinese Zen monks such as Rankai Dōryū, Mugaku Sogen and others came to Japan from China to spread the teaching. The result was the rise of Zen culture which later had remarkable influence upon all phases of Japanese culture. Painting, calligraphy, the tea-cult, flower-arrangement, Nō-literature, haiku, gardening, architecture, poetry and even schooling have been initiated or transformed by the spirit and principles of Zen.

What are the characteristics of this culture, and what are the reasons for saying they come out of Zen? Dr. Hisamatsu Shinichi, the author of *Zen and Fine Art*, lists in his recent book the following characteristics:

I. **ASYMMETRY:** This is most vividly expressed in the pictures of an arhat painted by Zengetsu, of Bodhidharma by Hakuin and of the tea-bowl by Honami Kōetsu. Their shapes or forms are distorted compared with other ordinary works. Looking at them does not involve us in some fixed form or convention such as perfection, elegance or the holy Zen dislikes above all things to formalize and conceptualize what is conceived in living experience, and this attitude is best expressed through distortion.

II. **SIMPLICITY:** This characteristic is seen in the architecture of the tea-house, and in sumiye-paintings. The ultimate reality in Zen is formless and abodeless. Zen prefers to have no form but, since it cannot be expressed without some form, the simplest is the most appreciated. Of all simple forms, however, the simplicity we see in the shrine at Ise and the naivety of crayon drawings by children belong to a different order from that which is valued in Zen. The simplicity of Zen does not lead to complexity or richness, but is beyond them. It is the beauty of the frosted.

III. **EMANCIPATED LOOK:** This is seen in the picture painted by Ryōkai of the Buddha descending from the mountain, in

Daitō Kokushi's calligraphy, in the rock garden at Ryōanji, and the cloven-footed tea-bowl from Korea. In them we see nothing sensual or weak. If there is such a thing as the figure of the true man of no title as is stated in the *Rinzairoku*, it would be the ideal perfection of the emancipated look.

IV. NATURALNESS: This characteristic is the state of no intention or artlessness. What is meant by such terms as desireless, effortless, mindless and selfless is the expression of this state of mind.

'Whence is my life?  
Whither does it go?  
I sit alone in my hut,  
And meditate quietly;  
With all my thinking I know no where,  
Nor do I come to any whither:  
Such is my present,  
Eternally changing—all in Emptiness!  
In this Emptiness the Ego rests for a while,  
With its yeas and nays;  
I know not where to set them up,  
I follow my Karma as it moves, with perfect contentment.'

The above is a poem composed by Ryōkwan, a Zen monk belonging to the Sōtō School of Japan. His life was entirely natural and so are many of his poems and calligraphies.

V. PROFUNDITY: We feel this when we are in the tea-house, the buildings of a Zen monastery and Zen gardens. It is the depth of things without a bottom or the sweetness of after-taste. By arranging several trees, bamboos and stones, a capable Zen gardener can make people feel as if they were in deep mountains and dark valleys while they only stand in a small garden in the midst of a large town.

VI. UNWORLDLINESS: This is what we see in the picture of a monkey by Hakuin and in the calligraphy of 'Mind, moon

and wheel' by Ryōkwan. Both have passed far beyond the ordinary rules of painting and calligraphy.

The following statement on the eighth of the ten cow-herding pictures well expresses this state of mind: 'All confusion is set aside, and serenity alone prevails; even the idea of holiness does not obtain. He does not linger about where the Buddha is and where there is no Buddha he quickly passes on. When there exists no form of dualism, even a thousand-eyed one fails to detect a loophole. A holiness before which birds offer flowers is but a farce.'

VII. STILLNESS: This characteristic is what we feel during the chanting in a Zen monastery or the music played in the Nō-dance. The stillness is found in the midst of motion and sound.

These seven characteristics are present harmoniously in every work of Zen art. They are the essence of Zen which is formless and without holiness. Their appearance coincides with the rise of Zen Buddhism. There seems to be no similar type of culture in any other time or place in the world.

## The Thought of Zen

ZEN is the synthesis of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and Chinese Taoism, as far as its thought is concerned. Buddhism is a religion of emancipation with nirvāṇa as its goal, although the Pure Land Sect which emphasizes the gospel of salvation was developed in more recent times. To get emancipation or to experience nirvāṇa means to escape from the karmic chain of transmigration, which is universally accepted by people under the influence of Indian thought. It means to become birthless and deathless, to achieve eternal life. What then is the main thought of Mahāyāna Buddhism and where do we find it?

Zen is not a mere system of thought or philosophy, and it would be a great mistake to think that Zen can be grasped by intellectual study. Nevertheless it is historically related to the Prajñā philosophy, especially the Diamond Sūtra, the fourteenth chapter of which reads:

'At that time Subhūti listening to this Sūtra had a deep understanding of its meaning and, filled with tears of gratitude, said to the Buddha: "It is wonderful, indeed, World-honoured One, that the Buddha teaches us this Sūtra full of sense. Such a Sūtra has never been heard by me even with the eye of wisdom acquired in my past lives. World-honoured One, if there be a man who listening to it acquires a pure believing heart he will then have a true idea of things. He is to be known as having achieved a most wonderful virtue. World-honoured One, what is known as a true idea is no-idea, and so is called a true idea.

"World-honoured One, it is not difficult for me to believe, understand and hold this Sūtra to which I have now listened; but in the ages to come, in the next five hundred years, if there

are some who listening to this Sūtra are able to believe, understand and hold it, they will indeed be most wonderful beings. Why? Because they have no idea of an ego, a person, a being or a soul. Why? Because the idea of an ego is no-idea [of a person, being or soul]. Why? Because they are Buddhas who are free from all ideas."

"The Buddha said to Subhūti, "It is just as you say. If there be a man who, listening to this Sūtra, is neither frightened, alarmed nor disturbed, you should know him as a wonderful person. Why? Subhūti, the Tathāgata taught that the first Pāramitā is no-first Pāramitā and therefore is called the first Pāramitā. Subhūti, the Pāramitā of humility, is said by the Tathāgata to be no-Pāramitā of humility, and therefore it is the Pāramitā of humility. Why? Subhūti, anciently, when my body was cut to pieces by the King of Kāśyapa, I had neither the idea of an ego, of a person, of a being nor of a soul. Why? When at that time my body was dismembered piecemeal, if I had had the idea either of an ego, a person, a being or a soul, the feeling of anger and ill will would have been awakened in me.

"Subhūti, I remember, in my past five hundred births, I was a rishi called Kāśyapa, and during those times I had neither the idea of an ego, a person, a being nor a soul. Therefore, Subhūti, you should detach yourself from all ideas and develop the desire for supreme enlightenment. You should cherish thoughts without dwelling on form, sound, odour, taste, touch or quality. Whatever thoughts you may have are not to dwell on anything. If a thought dwells on anything, this is said to be no-dwelling. Therefore, the Buddha teaches that a Bodhisattva is not to practise charity by dwelling on form. Subhūti, the reason he practises charity is to benefit all beings.

"The Tathāgata teaches that all ideas are no-ideas, and again that all beings are no-beings. Subhūti, the Tathāgata is the one who speaks what is true and real, the one whose words are as they are, who does not speak falsehood nor equivocate.

' "Subhūti, in the Dharma attained by the Tathāgata there is neither truth nor falsehood. Subhūti, if a Bodhisattva should practise charity cherishing a thought which dwells on the Dharma, he is like a person who enters the darkness, he sees nothing. If he should practise charity without cherishing a thought that dwells on the Dharma, he is like a person with eyes, he sees all kinds of forms illumined by the sunlight.

"Subhūti, if there are good men and women in the time to come who hold and recite this Sūtra, they will be seen and recognized by the Tathāgata with his Buddha-knowledge, and they will all develop immeasurable and innumerable merit." <sup>1</sup>

The logic expanded in the Diamond Sūtra can be condensed as follows:

'A is not A, therefore, it is called A.'

This conclusion or judgement may be explained or understood thus: 'The world grasped through our senses and reason, or through dualistic thinking does not exist as it is comprehended. When one realizes this one may call it the world.'

The world we generally see is not eternal and changeless. Beside this world of phenomena there must be the essence of a phenomenal world, which is eternal, changeless and beyond the grasp of dualistic thought. It is neither within the phenomenal, nor apart from the physical, world. By changing our ordinary way of viewing things, which is intellectual or dualistic, to a new way of thinking, which is intuitive or non-dualistic, we can see the world of the essential, and are then in the midst of what Mahāyāna and in particular Zen Buddhists mean by emancipation, or nirvāṇa.

What, then, is the relationship of thought between Zen and Taoism? When Buddhism was first introduced to China in the first century, many Chinese thought that the new message from India was that of the Taoists. In the later Han period (25-220) some people, perhaps Taoists, began to say that Lao-tzū, the father of Taoism, went to the land of barbarians (India), and became known as the Buddha. This, though childish ex-

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Rider), pp. 30-1

pressed, is evidence that Buddhism was considered to be closer to Taoism than Confucianism. However, Indian thought was found to be too metaphysical, that is to say impractical, for the Chinese. Fortune, wealth and longevity are their three goals. They are very practically minded compared with the highly imaginative and mystical Indians. As Buddhism spread widely in China it became desirable to reform the teaching and Taoistic-minded people were active in the movement. And Zen came into being. It may be regarded as the Chinese protest against the Indian-styled message of Buddhism.

Now, let us investigate the Taoistic view of life as found in the *Tao T'í Ching*,<sup>1</sup> the most important classic of this teaching.

'Something evolved from chaos existed before heaven and earth. It is without sound or substance, is independent and immutable, all-pervading without undermining anything. Think of it as the mother of the universe.

'I do not know its name but call it Tao. Forced to describe it I would call it Great. The Great flows constantly and is therefore far-reaching, which means that it returns to its source.

'Therefore Tao is great, as are heaven, earth and the king, the bearer of Tao. There are four great ones in the universe and the king with Tao is one of them. He follows the law of earth, the earth that of heaven, the heaven that of Tao and the Tao follows the law of Nature.'<sup>2</sup>

'The Tao that can be defined is not the everlasting Tao, the name that can be named is not the everlasting name. The unnameable is the origin of heaven and earth, the nameable is the mother of all things.

'Therefore the enigma can be grasped through mindlessness, and the bounds (of things) seen through mindfulness.

'These two states of mind have come from the same source but differ in name. They are both mysterious, the very essence of mystery, whence all mysteries have come.'<sup>3</sup>

'Tao begot the One, the One the Three and the Three

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II for a Zen interpretation of the whole of the *Tao T'í Ching*.

<sup>2</sup> *Tao T'í Ching*, Chapter XXV

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter I.

everything. All things keep the balance between male and female, so maintaining harmony in the universe.

'Men dislike being orphans having little virtue and being wheels without hubs. But these are just what kings call themselves. As a rule, therefore, things are increased by being diminished and diminished by being increased.

'Like other men I teach that the strong and the violent will not die a natural death. Such is the main theme of my teaching.'<sup>1</sup>

'The Tao is without content, but its utility cannot be exhausted. It is so profound that it is the source of all things.

'The man of Tao blunts the sharpness of his mind, unravels complications, dims the brightness of his personality and shares the dust with common people. I do not know whose son he is. He must be the ancestor of the gods.'<sup>2</sup>

Lao-tzu's concept of Tao is a synonym of the Buddhist term Dharma, which means the state of being before it is split into the duality of subject and object. Prajñā, nirvāṇa and bodhi are other synonyms of the same thing. By bodhi is meant enlightenment which is a state of mind. Satori is the Japanese term for enlightenment, and it is what constitutes Zen. In other words, Zen is a matter of experience and not of mere concept or thought. Zen therefore avoids taking any system of thought as its own or as the standard of its life. The following dialogue will throw some light upon the matter:

Nansen was once asked by Jyōshū, 'What is Tao?'

Nansen: 'Ordinary mind is Tao.'

Jyōshū: 'Are we to try to get it?'

Nansen: 'As soon as one tries to get it, one deviates from it.'

Jyōshū: 'How do we know it without trying?'

Nansen: 'Tao is beyond both knowing and not-knowing. Knowing is false perceiving and not-knowing is the lack of awareness. When one attains to Tao, which is beyond doubt, one will see it as clearly as one sees the vastness of the universe. What then is the use of arguing about it?'

<sup>1</sup> *Tao Tz Ching*, Chapter XLII.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter IV.



Enlightenment and ignorance are two sides of the same thing, and the world one sees before and after the experience of satori is not different, as far as external conditions are concerned. Sotōba, the noted Chinese poet and statesman who was a devoted lay student of Zen, expresses the idea in the following verse:

'Misty rain on Mount Lu,  
And waves surging in Chê-chiang;  
When you have not yet been there,  
You surely have many regrets;  
But once there you wend homeward  
And how matter-of-fact things look!  
Misty rain on Mount Lu,  
And waves surging in Chê-chiang.'

Cherry blossoms may cheer up the hearts of a newly married couple but the flowers could be the source of tears for an old lady who has recently lost her husband. The same thing externally can be a different matter internally. So is the world for men of enlightenment and people of no-enlightenment.

Obaku left the following sermon:

'Buddha and sentient beings both grow out of One Mind, and there is no other reality than this Mind. It has been in existence since the beginningless past; it knows neither birth nor death, it is neither blue nor yellow; it has neither shape nor form, it is beyond the category of being and non-being; it is not to be measured by age, old or new; it is neither long nor short; it is neither large nor small; for it transcends all limits, words, traces and opposites. It must be taken just as it is in itself; when we attempt to grasp it in our thoughts, it slips away. It is like space whose boundaries are beyond measurement, no concepts are applicable here.

'This One Mind only is the Buddha, who is not to be segregated from sentient beings. Only because we seek it outwardly in a world of form, the more we seek the further it moves away

from us. To make Buddha seek after himself, or to make Mind take hold of itself—this is an impossibility to the end of eternity. We do not realize that as soon as our thoughts cease and all attempts at forming ideas are forgotten the Buddha reveals himself before us.

'This Mind is the Buddha, and Buddha is sentient being. When Mind assumes the form of a sentient being, it has suffered no decrease; when it becomes a Buddha, it has not added anything to itself. Even when we speak of the six virtues of perfection and the other ten thousand meritorious deeds equal in number to the sands of the Ganges, they are all in the being of Mind itself; they are not something that can be added to it by means of discipline. When conditions are at work, it is set up; when conditions cease to operate, it remains quiet. Those who have no definite faith in this, that Mind is Buddha, and attempt an achievement by means of a discipline attached to form, are giving themselves up to wrong imagination; they deviate from the right path.

'This Mind is Buddha; there is no Buddha outside Mind, nor is there any Mind outside Buddha. This Mind is pure, and like space has no specific forms [whereby it can be distinguished from other objects]. As soon as you raise a thought and begin to form an idea of it, you ruin the reality itself, because you then attach yourself to form. Since the beginningless past, there is no Buddha who has ever been attached to form. If you seek Buddhahood by practising the six virtues of perfection and the other ten thousand deeds of merit, this is grading [the attainment of Buddhahood]; but since the beginningless past there is no Buddha whose attainment was so graded. When you get an insight into the One Mind you find that there is no particular reality [which you can call Mind]. This unattainability is the Buddha himself.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen in the above there is no system of thought in Zen. To quote Zen sayings is like pointing a finger at the moon, because the moon of Zen is indescribable.

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Rider), pp. 132-4.

## Life in a Zen Monastery

TO STUDY Zen properly one is well advised to practise zazen or Zen meditation. Mere book reading or intellectual study of Zen classics is not sufficient to give a glimpse of satori as it really is. This is the true reason why the Zen sect of Buddhism still retains a special institution for this purpose. It is called the Zendō of the Zen monastery. The training of monks is quite severe, for disciplinary rules are almost the same as when they were established in China some twelve hundred years ago by the master Hyakujō. Let me describe life in a Zen monastery as I lived it in my youth.

A novice who wishes to apply for admission to a Zen monastery has to set out on a journey in a certain travelling dress. This pilgrimage is called *angya*, meaning a trip on foot. He puts on a large bamboo hat, white cotton leggings and a pair of straw sandals. Over his shoulders he carries a satchel containing the things he needs in the monastery. Their number is few because his life will be very simple.

The following is the 'Song of Angya' composed by Funyō Zenshō, one of the noted Chinese Zen masters of the early Sung.

'Determined to leave his parents, what does he want to accomplish?

He is a Buddhist, a homeless monk now, and no more a man of the world;

His mind is ever intent on the mastery of the Dharma.

His conduct is to be as transparent as ice or crystal,

He is not to seek fame and wealth,

But to rid himself of all defilements.

The only way open to him is to wander about and inquire;  
Let him be trained in mind and body by crossing mountains  
and fording rivers,  
Let him befriend wise men in the Dharma and pay them respect  
wherever he may meet them;  
Let him brave the snow and tramp the frosty roads, not minding  
the severity of the weather;  
Let him cross the waves and penetrate the clouds, chasing away  
dragons and evil spirits.

His iron staff accompanies him wherever he travels and his  
copper pitcher is well filled,  
Let him not then be annoyed with the ups and downs of  
worldly affairs,  
His friends are those in the monastery with whom he may weigh  
the Dharma,  
Trimming off once for all the four propositions and one  
hundred negations.

Beware of being led astray by others to no purpose;  
Now that you are in the monastery your business is to walk the  
great path,  
And, instead of becoming attached to the world, to be empty of  
all trivialities;  
Holding fast to the ultimate truth do not refuse hard work in  
any form;  
Cutting yourself off from noise and crowds, stop all toiling and  
craving.

Thinking of the man who threw himself down the precipice,  
and the other who stood all night in the snow, gather up all  
your fortitude,  
So that you may keep the glory of your Dharma-king always  
manifested;  
Be ever studious in the pursuit of the Truth and reverential  
towards the Elders;

You are asked to stand the cold, heat and privations,  
Because you have not yet come to the abode of peace;  
Cherish no envious thoughts for worldly prosperity, be not  
depressed just because you are slighted;  
But try to see directly into your own nature, not depending  
on others.

Over the five lakes and the four seas you go on pilgrimage from  
monastery to monastery;  
To walk thousands of miles over hundreds of mountains is  
indeed no easy task;  
May you finally have an intimate interview with the Master  
in the Dharma and be led to see into your own nature,  
Then you will no more take weeds for medicinal plants.<sup>1</sup>

#### TEST FOR ADMISSION

Arriving at the entrance to the monastery, the novice asks for acceptance into the Brotherhood by respectfully presenting a letter of introduction from the teacher by whom he was ordained as a monk. An official of the monastery will come out to see the new applicant, but he will say that admittance is impossible because the Zendō or meditation hall is full. The novice has, however, been told by his teacher to sit with bowed head on the front step until he is admitted. If he is left alone quietly, he should feel grateful to the authorities, because he might have been driven away by force with the words. 'Why don't you go? It is useless for you to wait for admission.' This test is called *niwazume*, meaning 'occupying the entrance court'. It generally lasts for three or four days, during which the novice will be given meals and lodging as a traveller.

If the novice proves himself to be earnest and strong enough to stand the training, he will be told to come inside and pass

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, pp. 5-6.

another three or four days on probation. This is called *tanga-zume* which literally means 'to leave in the morning'. This is when he finally decides whether he is really ready to undergo the monastic discipline, which is far from easy.

When a week or ten days have passed, he will be told that the directing monk has decided to give him permission to enter the Brotherhood. He is then taken to the meditation hall where senior monks are seated in the meditation posture. After making three formal bows in front of Mañjuśrī, the main image in the hall, he will be introduced to the Brotherhood. This ceremony is called *shintō-sandō* or the arrival of a new member.

#### INTERVIEWING THE RŌSHI

Rōshi literally means an old teacher, and the name is applied in the monastery to the master who gives spiritual guidance to monks. The new member of the Brotherhood will be given an opportunity of presenting himself to the master. This interview is called *shōken* or 'seeing each other'. It is really because of the master that the novice has decided to come to the monastery for training. For it is laid down that one cannot develop spiritual insight until one has met a proper teacher. At the first interview the rōshi is likely to ask the monk about his name, home, education and former teacher. The conversation may contain the spiritual touch besides dealing with ordinary subjects. The following occurred between a Chinese Zen master and his pupil:

Seppō asked a monk, 'What is your name?'

Monk: 'My name is Genki [literally 'mysterious loom'].'

Seppō: 'How much cloth do you weave every day?'

Monk: 'Not a piece of cloth I have on me.'

Seppō: 'Go back to your Zendō hall.'

Before the monk had taken more than a few steps to leave the master's presence, the latter called out, 'Your kesa [robe] is dropping to the ground!'

The monk turned his head, whereupon Seppō said: 'Fine that you have not a piece of cloth over you!'<sup>1</sup>

At the second interview with the master a kōan problem is given to the new monk for solution. The kōan study, in accordance with the traditional technique, is the Zen method of training a fresh mind away from intellectual comprehension to the intuitive grasp of the truth. A precise explanation of what a kōan is will be given in a later chapter.

### ZAZEN

The most important task in the monastic training is to practise meditation while seated, and is called zazen. This is done in the following manner:

'He who wishes to study prajñā must first rouse great compassion in himself, and take the great vow, swearing to save sentient beings by means of the thorough practice of samādhi, without seeking emancipation for himself alone. That is to say, he is to give up all contacts, stop everything, bring body and mind into oneness regardless of whether he is moving or still, regulate his eating and drinking so that it is neither too much nor too little, and adjust his sleep so that it neither indulges nor limits him.

'When he practises meditation, let him retire into a quiet place, have a thickly wadded cushion for his seat, keep his dress and belt loosely adjusted, and assume a proper formal posture. He is to sit with his legs fully crossed by placing the right foot over the left thigh and the left foot over the right thigh. Sometimes the half-cross-legged posture is permitted, in which case simply let the left leg rest on the right thigh. Next, he is to place the right hand on the left leg with its palm up and on this rests the left hand, while the thumbs press against each other over the palm. He now raises the whole body slowly and

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, p. 12.

quietly, moves it repeatedly to the left and to the right, backward and forward, until the proper seat and straight posture is assured. He will take care not to lean too much to one side, either left or right, forward or backward, his spinal column should be erect with his head, shoulders, back and loins each properly supporting the others like a Buddha. But he is advised to be careful not to sit too upright or rigidly, or he will soon begin to feel uneasy. The main thing for the sitter is to have his ears and shoulders, nose and navel in one vertical plane, while his tongue rests against his upper palate and his lips and teeth are firmly closed. Let his eyes be slightly opened in order to avoid falling asleep. When meditation advances the wisdom of this practice will grow apparent. Great masters of meditation from of old have kept their eyes open.

'When the position is steadied and the breathing regular the sitter may now assume a somewhat relaxed attitude. Let him not be concerned with ideas, good or bad. Let him concentrate himself on the kōan, which is to think the unthinkable by going beyond the realm of thought. When the exercise is kept up persistently for a sufficient time, disturbing thoughts will naturally cease to assert themselves and there will prevail a state of oneness, which is, however, not to be understood conceptually. This is the essential method of zazen.'<sup>1</sup>

There is a special period generally once a month which is called 'great sesshin' and lasts a week. Sesshin means to collect thoughts and during the week monks are free to give their whole time, day and night, to zazen. In order to bring out the fruit of zazen or meditation monks are encouraged to see the master in his room. This personal interview is called *sanzen* at which monks discuss their given kōan with the master.

The following instructions by Master Fugan Dangan will be of some help to seekers of Zen experience: 'All things are reducible to the One, and where is this One reduced? Keep this kōan in your mind and never allow yourself to think that quietude or a state of unconsciousness is the *sine qua non* in your

<sup>1</sup> From *Zazengi* or *The Method of Sitting in Meditation*.



kōan exercise. When you feel confused in your mind so that your power of attention wanders, do not try to gather it up again by means of a thought, but mustering your spirits, use every means to keep your kōan before you. Courage and determination are needed at this juncture.

'But if you still feel dull and confused and unable to focus your thought, get up and walk about somewhat briskly for a while. You will soon find yourself much refreshed; then return to your cushion and continue your exercise. Suddenly a state of consciousness comes about in which your kōan rises of its own accord before the mind, asking for its own solution and refusing to vanish from the centre of your attention. You do not then know whether you are walking or sitting, your "spirit of inquiry" alone occupies the whole field. This is called the stage of passionlessness or egolessness, but it is not yet an ultimate state; another strong whipping is needed, and you must double the effort to see where, after all, the One is to be reduced.

'At this stage you do not feel that you have made any definite advance, in "lifting-up" the kōan. "The spirit of inquiry" is working out its own way so intensely that there is no conscious effort on your part to continue the exercise. After a while even this is swept away, and you attain a state of unconsciousness in which there is neither the kōan nor the one who holds it. This is known as the stage of objectlessness. Is it a final one? No, by no means. Says an ancient master: "Do not think that the state of unconsciousness is the truth itself, for there is still another frontier-gate to be broken through."

'If you happen, while in this state of mind, to hear a sound or to see an object, [you return to normal consciousness] and the whole thing comes to a sudden end: you have at last touched the ultimate reality. Nothing is left to you at this moment but to burst out into a loud laugh. You have accomplished a final turning and in very truth know that "when the cow in Kwai State grazes the herbage, the horse in Eki State finds its stomach filled".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rinkan Roku.

## TAKUHATSU

Almost every other day, the monks of the monastery go out for takuhatsu or alms. Three or four monks walk along the street shouting loudly, at which men and women in sympathy with monastic life come out and offer money. Takuhatsu is the chief means of supporting the monk's life, but the begging has moral significance as well as economic value. The monks are to cultivate the sense of humility and the donors to accumulate the merit of self-denial. The moral significance is more important than the economic one.

In the autumn the monks go into the country when the farmers are ready to gather up vegetables such as pumpkins, radishes, turnips and potatoes. They ask for those that have been rejected as unfit for market, pile them on a hand-cart and return with it to the monastery. If when begging for rice they go too far to return the same day, they may stay in a country temple affiliated to their monastery. The local priest will take good care of them physically and give them spiritual encouragement, especially if he has gone through the same training and is still a student of Zen.

Here is a Zen story in relation to begging: One summer evening Hakuin presented his kōan solution to his old master who was cooling himself on the veranda. The master said, 'Stuff and nonsense.' Hakuin echoed loudly and rather satirically, 'Stuff and nonsense!' Thereupon the master seized him, boxed him several times and pushed him off the veranda. It was soon after the rainy weather, and poor Hakuin rolled in the mud. Recovering himself after a while, he came up and reverently bowed to the teacher, who then said, 'O you, denizen of the dark cavern!'

Another day Hakuin thought that the master did not know how deep was his knowledge of Zen and decided to have a settlement with him anyhow. When the time came he entered the master's room and exhausted all his ingenuity in arguing

with him, determined this time not to give way an inch. The master was furious, and finally seizing Hakuin gave him several slaps and pushed him over the porch again. He fell several feet to the foot of the stone wall, where he remained for a while almost senseless. The master looked down and laughed heartily at the poor fellow. This brought Hakuin back to consciousness. He came up again in a sweat and the master stigmatized him as ever with 'O you, denizen of the dark cavern!'

Hakuin grew desperate and thought of leaving the old man altogether. One day he was begging in the village when an accident happened. While going from house to house he came to an old woman who refused to give him any offering. However, he kept on standing in front of her, looking as if nothing had been said to him. His mind was so intensely concentrated on the subject that concerned him most of the time. The woman got angry, because she thought he was ignoring her and trying to have his own way. She struck him with a heavy broom, smashing his large hat and knocking him down, and told him to be off. He lay there for a while, and when he came to his senses again, everything had become clear and transparent. This suddenly opened his mental eye to the truth of Zen, hitherto a closed book to him. His joy knew no bounds and he came back in a most exalted state of mind. Before he crossed the front gate, the master recognized him and beckoned to him, saying: 'What good news have you brought home today? Come right in, quick, quick!' Hakuin then told him what he had gone through. The master tenderly stroked him on the back and said, 'You have it now, you have it now.' After this, Hakuin was never called names again.

#### SAMU

'A day of no work is a day of no eating' is the literal rendering of the first rule of Zen monastic life. Hyakujo, who was the founder of the monastic institution, was always found engaged

with his monks in some manual task. The monks wanted to keep him away because they did not wish to see their old master working as hard as themselves. But he insisted, saying, 'I have accumulated no merit to deserve service from others, if I do not work, I have no right to take my meals.' His motive for working came from his feeling of humility, but in fact, manual labour forms one of the most essential features of Zen life. In India, Buddhist monks simply begged for their food and were little inclined to work. But things were different in China. Life to Chinese monks meant physical labour, with their hands, feet and tools, in order to accomplish visible and tangible ends. The practical Chinese mind saved Buddhism from sinking into a state of lethargy and a life of mere contemplation, as is clearly shown in Zen monasteries.

However high and soaring our ideas may be, we are firmly rooted in the earth, there is no way of escaping from physical existence. Whatever thoughts we may have must be related to our body, if they are to influence life in any way. The monk is asked to solve highly abstract metaphysical problems; and to do this he devotes himself to meditation. But as long as this meditation remains abstract there will be no practical solution. The Yogin may think that he understands this clearly; but as long as this understanding is restricted to his hours of meditation and he does not put it into practice in his daily life, the solution remains in the realm of ideas, bears no fruit and soon dies out. Zen masters have, therefore, always been anxious to see their monks work hard on the farm and in the woods or mountains. In fact they would themselves lead the working party, taking up the spade, the cutters, or the axe, carrying water or pulling the hand-cart.

The daily work of the monks consists of sweeping and cleaning the buildings and gardens, cutting wood and bamboos and raising vegetables on the farm. No paid labourers are kept in the monastery, and monks share the work needed for the maintenance of their life which includes cooking meals. Visitors will be struck by the quietness, cleanliness and neatness

throughout every monastery. The Western proverb 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness' is equally true in Zen.

Here is an instructive story about samu or the work:

'Kyōgen was a disciple of Hyakujyō. After the master's death he went to Yisan who was a senior disciple of Hyakujyō. Yisan said, "I am told that you have been under my late master Hyakujyō, and also that you have remarkable intelligence; but the understanding of Zen through this medium necessarily ends in intellectual and analytical comprehension, which is not of much use. Yet you may have had an insight into the truth of Zen. Let me have your view on the reason of birth and death, that is, on your own being before your parents gave birth to you."

'Kyōgen did not know what to reply. He retired to his room and searched assiduously among the notes which he had taken of the sermons given by his late master. He failed to come across a suitable passage for presentation as his own view. He returned to Yisan and implored him for instruction in the faith of Zen. But Yisan said: "I really have nothing to tell you, and if I tried to do so, you might make me an object of ridicule later on. Besides, whatever I say is my own and will never be yours." Kyōgen was disappointed and considered Yisan unkind. Finally he decided to burn the notes and memoranda which were of no help to his spiritual welfare, and, retiring from the world, to spend the rest of his life in solitude and simplicity in accordance with Buddhist rules. He reasoned: 'What is the use of studying Buddhism, when it is so difficult to comprehend and too subtle to be transmitted by another? I shall be a plain homeless monk, troubled with no desire to master things too deep for thought.' He left Yisan and built a hut near the tomb of Echū, the National Master, at Nanyō. One day, when weeding and sweeping the ground, a stone which he had brushed away struck a bamboo and the sound unexpectedly elevated his mind to a state of satori. The question proposed by Yisan became transparent; his joy was boundless, he felt as if he had met his lost parent again. He also came to realize

Yisan's kindness in refusing him instruction. For he now knew that this would not have happened if Yisan had been unkind enough to explain things for him.'

Below is the verse he composed soon after his achievement from which we may get an idea of his satori:

'One stroke has made me forget all my previous knowledge,  
No artificial discipline is needed;  
In every movement I uphold the ancient way,  
And never fall into the rut of quietism;  
No traces are left where I walk  
And my senses are not fettered by rules of conduct;  
Everywhere all those who have attained to the truth,  
Declare this to be of the highest order.'<sup>1</sup>

#### LIFE OF PRAYER

To some it seems strange to find images and prayers in Zen as in other theistic religions. But the truth of Zen is to be seen neither in forms nor without forms. This is what is meant by nothingness or formlessness in Zen.

Zen monks in the monastery get up at the sound of the temple bell, which is struck about four o'clock in summer and five in winter. They wash at once and then attend morning service at the main building where an image of Śākyamuni is enshrined. For about an hour they chant sūtras and a certain prayer. The Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya Sūtra is one of those chanted every morning:

'When the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was engaged in the practice of the deep Prajñāpāramitā, he perceived there are the five skandhas; and these he saw in their self-nature to be empty.

'O Śāriputra, form is here emptiness, emptiness is form; form is none other than emptiness, emptiness is none other than

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series* (Rider), pp. 242-3.

form; what is form that is emptiness, what is emptiness that is form. The same can be said of sensation, thought, confection and consciousness.

‘O Śāriputra, all things here are characterized with emptiness, they are neither born nor annihilated, they are neither stained nor immaculate, they do not increase or decrease. Therefore, O Śāriputra, in emptiness there is no form, sensation, confection or consciousness, no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind; no form, sound, colour, taste, touch or object; there is no dhātu of vision, and so no dhātu of consciousness; there is no knowledge, no ignorance, and so no old age and death, and no extinction of old age and death; there is no suffering, accumulation, annihilation or path; there is no knowledge, no attainment. In the mind of the Bodhisattva who dwells depending on the Prajñāpāramitā there are no obstacles; so that going beyond the perverted views, he reaches final Nirvāṇa. All the Buddhas of the past, present and future, depending on the Prajñāpāramitā, attain to the highest perfect enlightenment.

‘Therefore, one ought to know that the Prajñāpāramitā is the great mantram, the mantram of great wisdom, capable of allaying all pain; it is truth because it is not falsehood; this is the mantram proclaimed in the Prajñāpāramitā. It runs: “Gate, gate, pāragate, pārasaṃgate, bodhi, svāhā!” (O Bodhi, gone, gone, gone to the other shore, landed on the other shore, svāhā!)<sup>1</sup>

Daic’s prayer, which is also recited daily in the Zen monastery, runs:

‘My only prayer is to be firm in my determination to pursue the study of Truth, so that I may not feel weary however long I have to apply myself to it, to be light and easy in all parts of my body, to be strong and undismayed in body and mind; to be free from illness and to drive out both depression and light-heartedness; to escape every form of calamity, misfortune, evil influence and obstruction, so that I may instantly enter upon

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki. *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (Rider), p. 29.

the right way and not be led astray into the path of evil, to efface all the evil passions, to make Prajñā grow, to have an immediate enlightenment on the matter that most concerns me, and thereby to continue the spiritual life of the Buddhas; and further to help all sentient beings to cross the ocean of birth and death, whereby I may requite all that I owe to the loving thoughts of the Buddhas and the patriarchs. My further prayer is not to be too ill, or to suffer too much at the time of my departure, to know its coming beforehand, say, seven days ahead, so that my thoughts may dwell peacefully and properly on Truth; abandoning this body, unattached to any tie at the last moment, to be reborn without delay in the land of the Buddhas, and seeing them face to face to receive from them the final testimony of supreme enlightenment. This will enable me to divide myself infinitely in the Dharmadhātu and help all sentient beings to cross the ocean of birth and death. These prayers are offered to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas of the past, present and future in the ten quarters, and to Mahāprajñāpāramitā.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these sūtras and prayers, the monks recite the 'Inscriptions on the Right-hand Side of the Seat' written by National Teacher Echū:

'The Bhikshus in these latter days look like the homeless ones (of old) but at heart have no feelings of shame and remorse.

'Their bodies are covered with the priestly robe but their minds are tainted with worldly defilements.

'They recite with their mouths the sacred scriptures, but they harbour greed and lust in their minds.

'During the day they pursue fame and wealth, while at night they are drunk with impure attachments.

'Outwardly they observe the moral precepts, whereas inwardly they are secret violators of the rules.

'Forever busy with worldly affairs, they neglect to discipline themselves for deliverance.

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki. *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, pp. 48-9.



'They are devoted so much to the cherishing of idle thoughts that they have already thrown away right knowledge.

'1. Hold firmly to the desire for Truth in order to be able to see into your own nature.

'2. Cherish deep doubt in regard to your kōan and bite on it as if it were an iron ball.

'3. Keeping up your erect posture on the seat, never lie down in bed.

'4. Cultivate the sense of humility and remorse by reading books and sayings left by the Buddha and the patriarchs.

'5. Keeping the body pure in accordance with the precepts, never let it become tainted, and the same applies to the mind.

'6. Always behave with quiet dignity and in no circumstances be rash and boisterous.

'7. Talk softly in a low tone and be not given up to idle joking.

'8. There may be people who do not believe you, but do not let them deride you.

'9. Be always ready to use your dusters and brooms in order to keep the monastery buildings and courts free from dust.

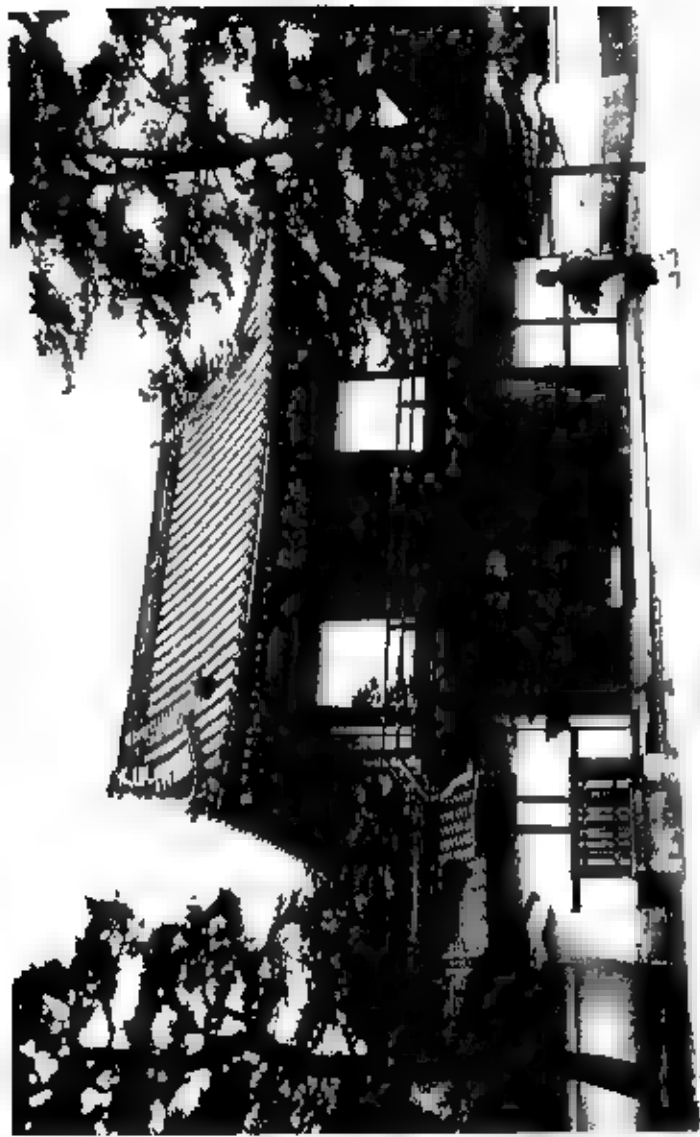
'10. Untiringly pursue the course of Truth and never be addicted to excessive eating and drinking.

Birth and death are indeed the grave,  
Every moment of this life is to be begrudged,  
Impermanency will be here too soon,  
Time waits for no one.  
It is rare to be born a human being,  
And we are now born as such.

'It is not easy to be able to listen to the Buddha's teaching,  
'And we have now listened to it.

'Thus being so, if we do not attain emancipation in this life,  
'In what life do we expect to emancipate ourselves?'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, pp. 49-50.



*A novice arriving at a Zen monastery*

雲門圖 朱子題

一田一畝得雲門之南少東西活潑

多雲朝遊金寶之暇暇在兒

清風

色色雲門金寶之暇暇在兒

西山松栢園金寶之暇暇在兒

松手還

雲門金寶之暇暇在兒

一言也投僧故都其情事志不

忘手

少經年

世此時投僧合吾不如在吾家  
別世大立主只是二十年長養  
使人知此投僧之妙每祥人  
金 長壽山 而演 紅作區

## FOOD

Meals in the monastery are very simple, breakfast consisting of gruel and pickles. At lunch the monks are served with rice mixed with barley, miso soup and pickles, and the evening meal is the same as breakfast. On special occasions such as the founder's day and the Buddha's birthday, an extra vegetable dish will be added. The monks have, however, opportunities of being served rich dinners when they are invited to the homes of supporters. For Buddhists consider it meritorious to invite to a meal monks who have performed certain rituals in their homes.

Just as Christians say grace at meal-times, Zen monks chant both before and after taking food as follows:

### *The Names of the Ten Buddhas*

1. Vairochana Buddha is the Dharmakāya, Pure and Undeiled;
2. Lochana Buddha is the Sambogakāya, Perfect and Full;
3. Śākyamuni Buddha is the Nirmānakāya, Whose Forms are Manifested in Hundreds of Thousands of Kōtis;
4. Maitreya the Venerable Buddha, who is to be born Here in Time to Come;
5. All the Buddhas of the Past, Present and Future in All the Ten Quarters;
6. Mañjuśrī the Bodhisattva of Great Wisdom;
7. Samantabhadra the Bodhisattva of Great Deeds;
8. Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Great Love,
9. All the Venerable Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas;
10. Mahāprajñāpāramitā.

### *Before Breakfast*

The gruel-meal has ten advantages  
Whereby Yogins are benefited;  
Its results are boundless,  
Finally leading them to eternal happiness.

### *After Breakfast*

Having finished the morning gruel-meal,  
Let us pray that all beings  
Accomplish whatever task they are engaged upon  
And be furnished with all the Buddha-dharmas.

### *Before the Midday Meal*

The meal has three virtues and six tastes  
Offered to the Buddha and the Brotherhood;  
Let all sentient beings in the Dharmadhātu  
Universally share alike the offering.

### *Verse of the Saba*

O you of the spiritual worlds,  
I now offer this to you;  
Let this food fill the ten quarters  
And may all the spirits enjoy it.

### *The Five Reflections*

First, let us reflect on our own work and see whence it  
comes,

Secondly, let us reflect how imperfect is our virtue and whether we deserve this offering;

Thirdly, what is most essential is to control our minds and be detached from the various faults, greed, etc.

Fourthly, what we have eaten is to keep our bodies in good health;

Fifthly, we accept it in order to accomplish the task of enlightenment.

*Verse of the Three Morals of Food*

The first moral is to destroy all evils,  
The second to practise all good deeds,  
And the third to save all sentient beings—  
May we all attain the path of Buddhahood.

*After the Midday Meal*

Having finished the rice meal, my bodily strength is fully restored,

My power extends over the ten quarters and through the three periods of time, and I am strong;

No thought is to be wasted on reversing the wheel of cause and effect;

May all beings attain miraculous power!

*After Washing Up*

This water with which the bowls were cleansed,  
Has the taste of heavenly nectar;  
I offer it to you hosts of the spiritual realms,  
May you all be filled and satisfied!

Om, Ma-kula-sai Svâhâ!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk.*

## REGULATIONS

Life in a Zen monastery is quite out of keeping with modern life. We can almost say that anything modern and many things ordinarily regarded as symbolic of piety are absent from it. Instead of labour-saving machinery, what may appear as labour-wasting is encouraged. Commercialism and self-advertisement are banned. Scientific, intellectual education is forbidden. Comfort, luxury and womanly kindness are conspicuous for their absence. There is, however, a spirit of grim earnestness with which higher truths are sought; there is determined devotion to the attainment of superior wisdom, which will help to put an end to all the woes and ailments of human life, and also to the acquirement of the fundamental social virtues, which quietly pave the way to world-peace and the promotion of the general welfare of humanity. Zen life thus aims at turning out good citizens as social beings as well as individuals, besides maturing the monk's spiritual development. The rules, therefore, are kept very strictly. They are as follows:

### THE MIRROR OF ADVICE

The most important thing for the monks of our school is to understand the kōans left by the ancient masters. Recently, however, some ill-advised fellows have been found who are ignorant of the meaning of this thoughtful contrivance bequeathed by the wise men of the past; they despise the ancient wisdom, not allowing their pupils to study it with due care. Our own monk-students, failing to weigh properly the merit of such a misguided attitude of those ignorant critics, fall into a hopeless state of mind; they make light of the ancient kōans and boast of so doing in front of seasoned followers of Zen. They are truly to be pitied and laughed at.

Those who come to study Zen under my guidance should

cherish a grave doubt, each according to his capacity, as to the meaning of the ancient kōans as if his head were on fire. Let them keep on, without interruption, doubting the kōans until they come to realize a state of great fixation; when this state is broken through, they are able to leap out of the cave of birth and death. Then they can really understand what was in the hearts of the wise men of old. This is when they feel at ease with themselves and are able to requite all the kindly feelings that the Buddhas and Fathers have cherished for them. Why, then, should they waste this precious life of theirs by not doing anything serious or sufficiently important?

#### RULES REGULATING THE DAILY LIFE

The most urgent task is to study and master Zen. Therefore, whenever you have a point to discuss with the master, consult with the directing monk and try to see the master regardless of the time of day.

1. When entering the Zendō, fold your hands, palm to palm, before your chest; when going out of it, hold your hands, the right over the left, in front of the chest. Let your walking and standing be duly decorous. Do not walk across the front of the Mañjuśrī shrine and do not bustle or swagger when walking up and down (in the meditation hall).

2. During the meditation hours, no one is permitted to leave the hall except for interviewing the master. The intermission hours are to be devoted to other necessary movements. While outside, no whispering is allowed.

3. When the others walk about, do not remain in your seat and when walking do not shuffle your sandals. If, on account of disease, you are prevented from taking part in the walking, with the consent of the directing monk stand by your seat.

4. The keisaku (warning-stick) is to be used with discrimination on the monks, whether or not they are dozing. When submitting to the stick, courteously fold your hands and bow;



do not permit any egoistic thoughts to assert themselves and cherish no anger.

5. No one shall be absent at the tea-ceremony which takes place twice a day; no left-overs are to be thrown on the floor.

6. No sundry articles are to be scattered about the seats. No writing materials are allowed. Before leaving by the back door do not take off your upper garment at your seat.

7. Even when the Zendō is not in regular session, you are not to doze sitting against the back wall.

8. No one is allowed of his own accord to use the warning-stick even though he may be suffering from stiffness in his shoulder-muscles.

9. Going out to town or visiting the service quarter of the monastery is not permitted: if absolutely necessary, transact the business through the attendants of the Zendō; otherwise, all private affairs are to be settled on the 'needle and moxa' days.

10. On ordinary days the monks are not allowed in the attendants' quarters; if necessary, the directing monk is to be notified.

11. During morning service, those who doze are to be severely dealt with by the warning-stick.

12. At meals the monks are to conduct themselves quietly and to make no noise in handling the bowls; those who serve should move about quietly and with decorum.

13. At night when the meditation hours are over, go straight to bed, do not disturb others by sūtra-reading, bowing or whispering with neighbouring monks.

14. During the term, the monks are not allowed to leave the monastery unless their teachers or parents are critically ill or dead.

15. When a monk is newly admitted into the Brotherhood, the fact is announced and he takes the seat assigned to him; but before doing so, he must first bow to the Holy Monk (Mañjuśrī), and pay his respect to the head of the seating line and to the directing monk.

16. When the monks go out on their begging rounds, they

are not to swing their arms, put their hands inside their dress, stagger through the streets or whisper to one another; for such behaviour damages the dignity of monkhood. If they meet horses, carriages and so on in the streets, they must be careful to avoid walking into them. They must be orderly in all their movements.

17. The days bearing numbers four and nine are those for general sweeping, shaving, bathing, working outdoors and similar activities, sewing, moxa-burning and so forth may also take place on these days. But the monks are not supposed to visit one another and pass their time in talking idly, cracking jokes and laughing nonsensically

18. As to fixing bath days for the Brotherhood, the monks entrusted with the task are requested to consult the head monk of the general office and follow his directions.

19. When any one is indisposed, the matter is to be reported to the directing and attendant monks and the patient will be removed from the Zendō. While being nursed, he is not to read books, engage in literary work or pass the time in idle talk.

The above regulations are to be observed carefully. Those who violate them belong to the family of the Evil One and interfere with the welfare of the community. They are to be expelled speedily after a council has been held. The reason is to preserve the life of the community as long as possible.

#### REGULATIONS FOR THE SICK-ROOM

Any one who happens to be the occupant of this room because of ill health, must practise zazen silently even when taking his medicine with his head on the pillow. He must never neglect to exercise himself in the cultivation of right thought, otherwise the disease may be aggravated and the medicine cease to be effective. Three doses of medicine are to be taken daily; (but remember that) each basketful of charcoal costs three sen.

1. Fire of all kinds is to be kept carefully under control.
2. Neither sake nor herbs of the onion family are allowed even as medicine. According to the nature of the disease, special cooking is permitted after reporting to the office. Other things are prohibited.
3. Be careful not to soil the bedding, etc.
4. While in bed, a sick monk is not allowed to read books, engage in literary work or idle away his time in trivial talk. If he has been in the sick-room for five days, when he comes out he is expected to perform the rite of 'returning to Zendō'.

#### REGULATIONS FOR THE OFFICIAL QUARTERS

The most essential thing for a monk is to study Zen, so you are expected to exert yourselves in this. After the daily work, keep your evening meditation as in the Zendō. Says an ancient master, 'To practise the exercise while working or walking is infinitely more valuable than when sitting quietly.' Keeping this in mind, exert yourselves to the best of your ability

1. Take the greatest care of fires and lights.
- 2 The monastery officials at morning and evening service, and on other occasions requiring their attendance, are not to fall behind the others.
3. If you are detained at your work at meal-times try to attend the second sitting. Do not make a noise in handling the bowls or drinking soup. When seated behave in an orderly manner and with decorum.
4. You are expected to join the others on the begging rounds or in working out of doors; if you are prevented from this, do not neglect to report the fact at the general office.
5. Do not visit other official rooms or spend the time in gossiping and talking trivialities, thereby interrupting others in their hours of meditation. When business requires visits, do not prolong them longer than is absolutely necessary
6. Going into town is strictly forbidden. If it is necessary to

go out of the gate, the general office is to be notified. When in town you are expected to behave like a monk.

7. When sick and unable to attend the services, etc., the fact is to be reported at the general office; such monks are not to visit other official rooms.

8. After the evening meditation hours each monk is to retire at once to his own bed. No wasting of light is allowed by sitting up late and talking nonsense. The bedding and other articles are to be kept clean.

9. All the articles and pieces of furniture belonging to the service quarters are to be used with the utmost care. After use, remember to return them where they are kept. An ancient master said, 'All the belongings of the service quarters are to be used as a man does his own eyes.'

10. Sandals are not to be left carelessly on the floor. Do not make rustling sounds while walking up and down the hall. Do not make light of the trivial deeds of daily life, for great virtues are born of them. Pray be mindful of all that has been stated above.

#### REGULATIONS FOR THE GUEST-ROOM

Monks intently bent on the mastery of Zen go on pilgrimage in search of an able master and superior friends. When the evening comes, they find a monastery in which to pass the night. Being permitted to enter the guest-room, they relieve themselves of their travelling outfit, and sit in the meditation posture facing the wall. It is most regrettable that recently there have been some travelling monks with no wish to conduct themselves in accordance with custom. The main thing for monks, however, is to devote their entire energy to the settlement of the gravest business they can have in this life in whatever surroundings they may find themselves. The real meaning of the Zen pilgrimage is here, as was anciently seen in the company of Seppō, Gantō and Kinzan. O monks, be ever diligent!

1. No travelling monks are admitted after the evening bell has been struck.

2. Do not ask for a second night's lodging however stormy and windy the day may be. In case of sickness this rule is waived.

3. It is forbidden to doze leaning against your travelling bag. The visiting monk is not to go to bed until the evening meditation hours are over or until a notice to that effect has been given to him.

4. Attend morning service when the bell in the hall is heard; the kesa (robe) may be omitted

5. The morning gruel is served when the umpan (cloud-board) is struck.

6. No light is to be burned in the night.

#### REGULATIONS FOR THE BATHROOM

While taking a bath, the 'exquisite touch' of warmth must be made to lead to the 'realization of the nature of water'. No idle talking is allowed. Proper respect is to be paid to the venerable Bhadra before and after the bath.

1. The greatest care must be taken of fire.

2. The bathroom is attended to in turn by the monks from the Zendō. Otherwise, orders are issued from the general office.

3. When the master takes his bath, have his attendants notified. In the case of other important people special attention will be given to the cleanliness and orderliness of the bathroom.

4. When the bath is ready, the wooden blocks are clapped according to the regulations, and the monks led in rotation to the room by the Zendō attendants.

5. Dead leaves gathered from the woods and other waste materials are to be used for fuel.

6. When the bathing is over, carefully remove all the embers and hot ashes and put them out.

7. On the day following, the bath-tub will be thoroughly scrubbed and the entire room nicely cleansed, while the vessels are properly arranged.

The above regulations are to be observed in detail. Casual use of the bathroom is not permitted, as it interferes with zazen.

## The Kōan Exercise

THE ultimate goal of Zen study is to attain the enlightenment which is known in Japanese as 'satori'. It is also called 'kenshō', meaning 'seeing into Self-nature'. In the satori state of mind one sees the world, including oneself, from a new view-point; that is to say, one transcends oneself. All discriminative ideas, such as mind, body, life, death, time and space, which are intellectual analyses of life as a whole and of reality, cease to disturb your peace of mind in its natural state. It is perfect emancipation from everything; it is that passivity of mind which in Buddhism is called nirvāṇa.

It is not, however, merely sitting quiet cross-legged. When at Dembōin, Baso was sitting cross-legged all day meditating, his master, Nangaku, saw him and asked, 'What do you seek here sitting cross-legged like that?'

'My desire is to become a Buddha.'

Thereupon, the master took up a piece of brick and began to polish it hard on a nearby stone.

'What are you doing, master?' asked Baso.

'I am trying to turn this into a mirror.'

'No amount of polishing will make a mirror of the brick, sir.'

'If so, no amount of sitting cross-legged like that will make you a Buddha,' said the master.

'What then should I do?'

'It is like driving a cart; when it does not move, will you whip the cart or the ox?'

Baso made no answer.

The master continued: 'Will you practise this sitting cross-legged in order to attain dhyāna or Buddhahood? If it is

dhyāna, dhyāna does not consist in sitting or lying, if it is Buddhahood, the Buddha has no fixed forms. As he has no abiding place anywhere, no one can take hold of him, nor can he be let go. If you seek Buddhahood by thus sitting cross-legged, you murder him. Unless you free yourself from sitting so, you will never come to the truth.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we can say that satori is an experience of awakening to an entirely new world, which is indescribable. But there is no Zen where there is no sense of satori. Without satori a Zen monk is no Zen monk, he is like pepper which is not hot or a lamp with no light in it. To use the Christian term, satori is a kind of conversion, though it does not mean quite the same thing. Satori is above all that is noetic and emotional.

The following statement by Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Zen in China, will explain what satori is:

'If you wish to seek the Buddha, you ought to see into your own Nature; for this Nature is the Buddha himself. If you have not seen into your own Nature, what is the use of thinking of the Buddha, reciting sūtras, fasting or keeping the precepts? By thinking of the Buddha, your cause (meritorious deed) may bear fruit, by reciting the sūtras your intelligence may grow brighter; by keeping the precepts you may be born in the heavens; by practising charity you may be rewarded abundantly; but as to seeking the Buddha, you are far away from him. If your Self is not yet clearly comprehended, you ought to seek a wise teacher and get a thorough understanding of the root of birth-and-death. One who has not seen into his own Nature is not to be called a wise teacher.

'When this (seeing into one's own Nature) is not attained, one cannot escape from the transmigration of birth-and-death, however well he may be versed in the study of the twelve divisions of the sacred scriptures. He will never escape from the sufferings of the three worlds. Anciently there was a Bhikshu Zenshō who could recite all twelve divisions of the scriptures, yet he could not save himself from transmigration because he

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series* (Rider), pp. 296-7.



had no insight into his own Nature. If this was the case even with Zenshō, how about those moderners who, being able to discourse only on a few sūtras and fastras, regard themselves as exponents of Buddhism? They are truly simple minded. When mind is not understood, it is of no avail to recite and discourse on idle literature. If you want to seek the Buddha, you ought to see into your own Nature, which is the Buddha himself. The Buddha is a free man—a man who neither works nor achieves. If, instead of seeing into your own Nature, you turn away and seek the Buddha in external things, you will never meet him.

"The Buddha is your own Mind, do not make the mistake of bowing (to external objects). "Buddha" is a Western word, and in this country it means "enlightened Nature"; and by enlightened is meant "spiritually enlightened". It is one's own spiritual Nature in enlightenment that responds to the external world, comes into contact with objects, raises the eyebrows, winks the eyelids and moves the hands and legs. This Nature is the Mind, and the Mind is the Buddha, and the Buddha is the Way, and the Way is Zen. This simple word, Zen, is beyond the comprehension both of the wise and the ignorant. To see directly into one's original Nature, this is Zen. Even if you are well learned in hundreds of the sūtras, you are still an ignoramus in Buddhism if you have not yet seen into your original Nature. Buddhism is not there (in mere learning). The highest truth is unfathomably deep, is not an object of talk or discussion and even the canonical texts cannot bring it within our reach. Let us once see into our own original Nature and we have the truth even when we are quite illiterate. . . .

"Those who have now seen into their own Nature may read the sūtras, think of the Buddha, study long, work hard, practise religion throughout the six periods of the day, sit for a long time and never lie down for sleep, and may be very learned and well-informed in all things, and they may believe that all this is Buddhism. But the Buddhas in successive ages only talk of seeing into one's Nature. All things are impermanent; until you get an insight into your Nature, do not say, "I have perfect

knowledge " That is really committing a very grave crime. Ānanda, one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha, was known for his wide knowledge, but had no insight into Buddhahood, because he was so bent on gaining information. . . .<sup>1</sup>

When students came to seek for the truth in Zen they had problems to solve, but their teachers managed to lead their minds up to the satori experience by discussing those problems with them:

According to *The Transmission of the Lamp*, Eka was liberal-minded and open-hearted. Although thoroughly acquainted with Confucian and Taoist literature, he was never satisfied with it because he did not think it sufficiently thorough. When he heard that Bodhidharma had come from India, he went to Shōrinji where the master stayed. He tried to discuss the subject upon which he wished to be enlightened, but the master was always sitting silently facing the wall.

On the ninth of December of the same year, he stood in the fast-falling snow all night and did not move until the morning when the snow had reached his knees. Bodhidharma then took pity on him and said, 'You have been standing in the snow for some time, what is your wish?'

Replied Eka, 'I have come to receive your invaluable instruction; pray open the gate of mercy and extend your saving hand to this poor suffering mortal.'

Bodhidharma then said: 'The incomparable teaching of the Buddha can only be understood after a long and hard discipline, by enduring what is most difficult to endure and by practising what is most difficult to practise. Men of inferior virtue and wisdom who are light-hearted and full of self-conceit are not able even to see the truth of Buddhism. All the labour of such men is sure to come to naught.'

Eka was deeply moved, and in order to show the sincerity of his desire to be instructed in the teachings of all the Buddhas, he cut off his left arm with his sword and presented it to the

<sup>1</sup> *Kechinpyakuron* or *The Treatise on the Lineage of Faith*, see D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series* (Rider), pp. 233-5.

quietly meditating Bodhidharma. Thereupon, the master remarked, 'You are not to seek this (truth) through others.'

'My mind is not yet pacified. Pray, master, pacify it.'

'Bring your mind here and I will have it pacified,' said Bodhidharma.

After a short hesitation, Eka finally confessed, 'I have sought it for many years and am still unable to take hold of it.'

'There, your mind is pacified, once and for all,' Bodhidharma confirmed.

This confirmation on the part of the master at once opened Eka's eye of satori.<sup>1</sup>

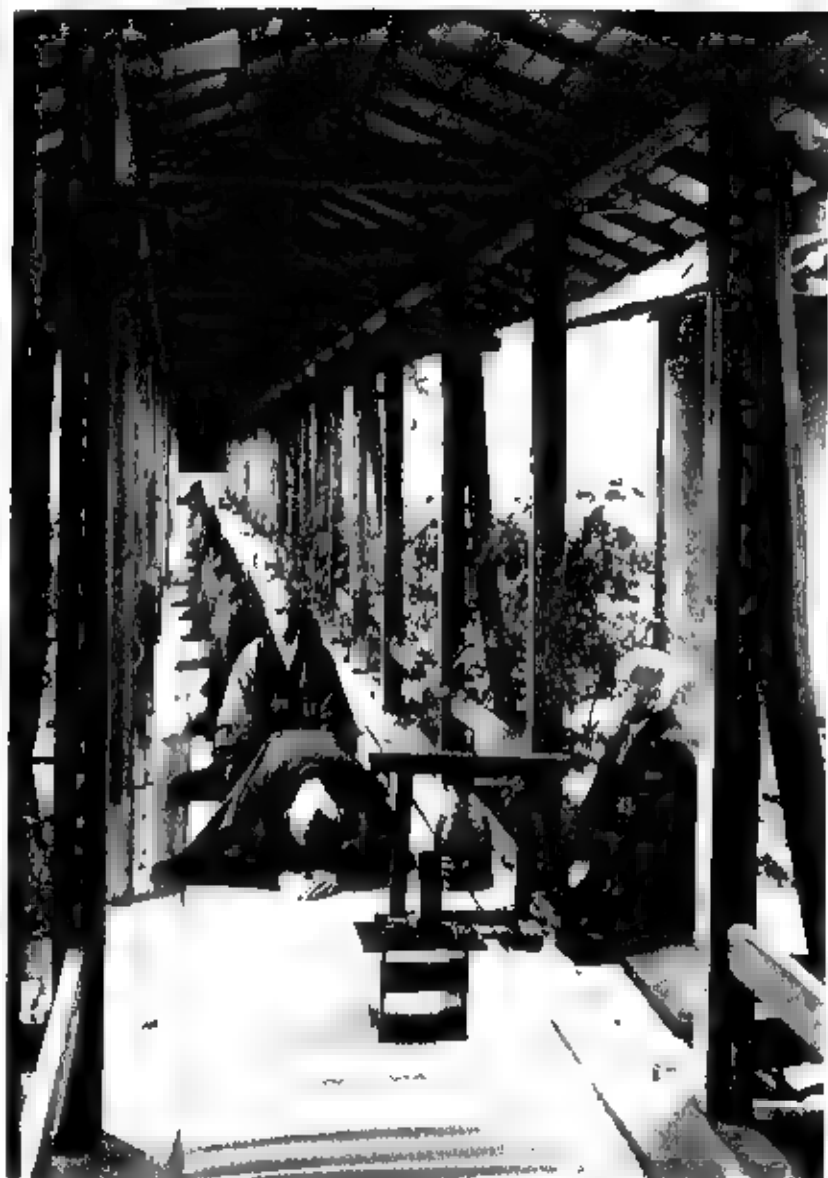
The case of Enō, the Sixth Patriarch, only differs from that of Eka if he is thought to have been an unlearned pedlar. The treatment given to Enō is in a way interesting as it reveals a certain tendency among those followers of Zen who ignore learning and the study of sūtras. In his case, however, there was an historical background which made him stand up to his rival, Jinshū, who was noted for his wide knowledge and scholarship. In reality, Enō was not such an ignoramus as his followers wanted him to appear, for his sermon known as the *Platform Sūtra* contains many allusions to Buddhist literature. All we can say of his learning is that he was not so erudite as Jinshū. According to history, his first knowledge of Zen came from the Diamond Sūtra. While peddling wood and kindling he overheard one of his patrons reading that sūtra. This inspired him and he decided to study Zen teachings under the Fifth Patriarch, Gumn. When he saw the master, the latter asked, 'Where do you come from? What do you want here?'

'I am a farmer from Shinshu and wish to become a Buddha.'

'So you come from the south,' said the master, 'but the southerners have no Buddha-nature in them; how can you expect to be a Buddha?'

Enō protested, 'There are southerners and there are

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rader), pp. 39-41.



Zen monks waiting for a Sanzen interview



Bodhidharma by Hakuin

northerners, but as to Buddha-nature, no distinction is to be made between them.'

If Enō had had no preliminary knowledge or experience of Buddhism he could not have answered like that. He worked under Gunin in the granary of the monastery as a rice-cleaner and not as a regular monk, and remained there for eight months. One day the Fifth Patriarch, wishing to decide on his successor, wanted to see how much of his teaching was understood by his followers and asked each of the five hundred to write a poem on Zen. The one composed by Jinshū, the most scholarly of his disciples, ran as follows:

'This body is the Bodhi-tree,  
The soul is like a mirror bright;  
Take heed to keep it always clean,  
And let no dust collect upon it.'

Enō was not satisfied and composed another which was written beside that of the learned Jinshū:

'Bodhi is not like a tree,  
The mirror is nowhere shining;  
As there is nothing from the beginning,  
Where can the dust collect?'

So far as we can judge by these poems alone, Enō's is in full accord with the doctrine of Emptiness as taught in the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, while Jinshū's has not yet fully grasped the spirit of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Thus Enō's mind, from the first, developed along the lines of the Diamond Sūtra which he learned even before he came to Gunin. But it is evident that he could not have composed the poem without having experienced the truth of Emptiness in himself. His first inspiration from the Diamond Sūtra made him realize the presence of a truth beyond this phenomenal world. He came to Gunin, but it required a great deal of trained intuitive power to enter the spirit of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and even with the genius of Enō

this could not have been accomplished easily. He must have worked very hard while cleaning rice to have delved so successfully into the secrets of his own mind. The eight months of menial work were not wasted; a great spiritual upheaval was going on in Enō's mind. The reading of Jinshū's poem gave him the opportunity to express his inner vision. Whatever learning, insight and instruction he had had before were brought finally to maturity and culminated in the poem which was the living expression of his experience. The Diamond Sūtra thus came to life in his own being. Unless Enō had actually experienced the Prajñāpāramitā, he could never have made the statement which he did to Emyō, one of his pursuers after he left Gunin. When Emyō wanted to be enlightened, Enō said, 'Think neither of good, nor of evil, but see what at the moment thine own original features are, which thou hadst even before coming into existence.'<sup>1</sup>

Tokusan, who is noted for the way he swung his staff, also studied the Diamond Sūtra before he was converted to Zen. Unlike his predecessor, Enō, he was very learned in the teaching of the sūtra and was extensively read in the commentaries, so that his knowledge of the Prajñāpāramitā was more systematic than Enō's. He heard of this Zen teaching in the south that a man could become a Buddha by immediately taking hold of his inmost nature. Thinking that it came not from the Buddha but from the Evil One, he decided to go south to refute it. In this respect his mission again differed from that of Enō. The latter wished to enter the spirit of the Diamond Sūtra under the guidance of the fifth Patriarch, while Tokusan's idea was to destroy Zen if possible. They were both students of the Diamond Sūtra, but were inspired by it in diametrically opposite ways. Tokusan's psychology reminds us of that of St. Paul as he walked under the summer sun along the road to Damascus.

Tokusan's first objective was the residence on Mount Ryutan of a Zen master called Sōshun. On his way he stopped at a tea-house where he asked the woman keeper to give him

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), pp. 42-3.

some refreshment. 'Refreshment' is called 'tien-hsin' in Chinese, meaning literally, 'to punctuate the mind'. Instead of serving the tired monk the woman asked, 'What are you carrying on your back?' He replied, 'They are commentaries on the Diamond Sūtra.'

'Are they indeed?' said the woman. 'May I ask you a question? If you can answer it to my satisfaction, you will have your refreshment free; but if you fail, you will have to go somewhere else.'

To this Tokusan agreed.

The woman keeper of the tea-house continued: 'I read in the Diamond Sūtra that the mind is obtainable neither in the past, nor in the present, nor in the future. If so, which mind of yours do you wish to punctuate?'

This unexpected question from an apparently insignificant countrywoman completely upset the scholarly Tokusan, for all his knowledge of the Diamond Sūtra and its commentaries gave him no inspiration whatever. The poor scholar had to go without his refreshment. But he also had to abandon his bold enterprise of defeating the teachers of Zen, being no match for the keeper of a road-side tea-house, how could he expect to defeat a professional Zen master? Even before he saw Sōshin, he was certainly made to think more about his self-imposed mission.

When Tokusan saw Sōshin, the master of Ryutan, he said, 'I have heard people talk so much of Ryutan (dragon's pool), yet as I see it, there is no dragon here, nor any pool.'

Sōshin quietly said, 'You are indeed in the midst of Ryutan.'

Tokusan finally decided to stay at Ryutan and to study Zen under the guidance of its master. One evening he was sitting quietly outside his room and yet earnestly in search of the truth. Sōshin said, 'Why do you not come in?' 'It is dark,' replied Tokusan. Whereupon Sōshin lighted a candle and handed it to Tokusan. When the latter was about to take it, Sōshin blew it out. This suddenly opened Tokusan's mind to the truth of Zen teaching. He bowed respectfully.



'What is the matter with you?' asked the master.

'After this,' Tokusan asserted, 'whatever propositions the Zen masters may make about Zen I shall never again cherish a doubt about them.'<sup>1</sup>

The next morning Tokusan took out all his commentaries on the Diamond Sūtra, once so valued and considered so indispensable that he carried them with him wherever he went, committed them to the flames and turned them all to ashes.

Rinzai was a disciple of Ōbaku, and the founder of the school that bears his name. His Zen experience presents some interesting features which may be considered typical of those days when the kōan system of Zen discipline was not yet in vogue. He had been studying Zen for some years under Ōbaku when the head monk asked, 'How long have you been here?' 'Three years, sir.' 'Have you ever seen the master?' 'No, sir.' 'Why don't you?' 'Because I do not know what question to ask him.' The head monk then told Rinzai: 'You go and see the master and ask, "What is the principle of Buddhism?"' Rinzai saw the master as he was told and asked, 'What is the principle of Buddhism?' Before he could finish, Ōbaku gave him several blows. When the head monk saw him coming back from the master, he enquired about the result of the interview. Said Rinzai sorrowfully, 'I asked him and was beaten with many blows.' The monk told him not to be discouraged but to see the master again. Rinzai saw Ōbaku three times, but the same treatment was accorded to him and poor Rinzai was none the wiser.

Finally, Rinzai thought it best to see another master and the head monk agreed. The master directed him to go to Taigu. When Rinzai came to Taigu, the latter asked, 'Where do you come from?'

'From Ōbaku.'

'What instruction did he give you?'

'I asked him three times about the ultimate principle of

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), pp. 46-8.

Buddhism and each time he gave me several blows without any instruction. I wish you would tell me what fault I committed.'

Taigu said, 'No one could be more thoroughly kind-hearted than that dotard master, and yet you want to know where you were wrong.'

Thus reprimanded, Rinzai's eye was opened to the meaning of Ōbaku's apparently unkind treatment. He exclaimed, 'After all there is not much in Ōbaku's Buddhism.'

Taigu at once seized Rinzai's collar and said: 'A while ago you said you could not understand and now you declare that there is not much in Ōbaku's Buddhism. What do you mean by that?'

Rinzai without saying a word struck Taigu in the ribs three times with his fist. Taigu let go of Rinzai and remarked, 'Your teacher is Ōbaku; I am not concerned with the whole business.'

Rinzai returned to Ōbaku, who asked him, 'How is it that you are back so soon?'

'Because your kindness is much too grandmotherly.'

Ōbaku said, 'When I see that fellow Taigu I will give him twenty blows.'

'Don't wait to see him,' said Rinzai, 'have it now!' So saying he gave the old master a hearty slap.

The old master laughed heartily.<sup>1</sup>

'In the early days of Zen Buddhism in China, there were enough original minds who looked for first-hand experience and never flinched from the hazardous adventure into the unknown country of Zen mysticism. The masters at that time had no special system for leading them to the final experience except by giving them some indications in gestures or words, both of which were quite unintelligible and repelled rather than attracted the truth-seekers. The path was strewn with thistles and brambles instead of flowers, and they had to risk much when they wandered along it. It was, therefore, natural that only a few of the many disciples who gathered about a

<sup>1</sup> D. T. Suzuki: *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), pp. 49-50.

master attained satori. Out of the five hundred or a thousand pupils that are said to have come to a mountain monastery presided over by a fully qualified Zen master, there were less than ten whose eyes were said to have been opened to the mysterious values of Zen. Zen was an aristocratic form of Buddhism. Its ideal was to produce one master-mind which towered far above the ordinary, rather than many mediocrities. The masters thus made the path of Zen as steep and thorny as they could so that only the tough-hearted could scale it to the summit. This, of course, was not intentional on their part; they had no malicious or selfish wish to keep the treasure to themselves; they naturally wanted to see their teachings embraced as widely as possible by their fellow-beings. They seemed never to tire of propagating it, but they wanted to be true to their insight, they could not stoop to appeal to popular taste, that is, they could not give up their vocation for mere reputation and cheap appreciation. Chōsa Keushin used to say, "If I were to demonstrate the truth of Zen in its absolute aspect, weeds would grow rampant in the front court of my monastery."

'On the other hand, the world is generally filled with imitators, counterfeiters and second-hand dealers in both commercial and religious circles. Perhaps more so in the latter, where it is less easy to distinguish the genuine from the spurious. When other practical circumstances are added to the difficulties inherent in Zen which make for its exclusion, and gradual disappearance from the world, we can see how mortified the masters must have been over the situation in which they often found themselves. They could not sit quietly in their mountain retreats and watch the decline of the Zen spirit. There were imitators enough who swallowed the letter and left the spirit behind. Moreover, since Enō, the Sixth Patriarch, there had been a steady growth of Zen literature, so that the way in which Zen expressed itself grew more delicate, subtle and varied. Gradually the School of Enō split into several branches, five of which were flourishing in the early Sung period (the eleventh century). The time was fast approaching when Zen

masters were not content just to wait and see Zen consciousness develop of its own accord. They recognized the need for some system to quicken the development and effect its healthful propagation and continued prosperity. They thought it was their duty to see that their Zen experience was transmitted from master to disciple without interruption. Thus the system of kōan exercises was invented and developed.<sup>1</sup>

What is a kōan? A kōan means 'a public document setting up a standard of judgement', whereby one's Zen understanding is tested for correctness. A kōan is generally some statement by a Zen master, or some answer given to a questioner. The following are kōans generally given to 'freshmen' in Japanese Zen monasteries today.

1. A monk once asked Master Jyōshū, 'Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?' Jyōshū said, 'Mu' (No). 'Now tell me, what is "Mu"?'

2. The Sixth Patriarch said to the monk Emyō, 'Think neither of the good nor the evil; but tell me what are your original features before your parents gave birth to you?'

3. The Master Hakuin said, 'What is the sound of one (clapping) hand?'

4. Daibai once asked Baso, 'What is Buddha?' And Baso said, 'Your very being is Buddha.'

5. The Master Hōen said: 'Even Buddha Śākyamuni and Bodhisattva Maitreya are but his servants. Who is he?'

There are, it is said, 1,700 kōans which are historical—that is to say, kōans left by the ancients—beside those problems one encounters in daily activities, which are known as eventual, or kōans from daily life.

Technically speaking, the kōan given to the uninitiated is intended 'to destroy the root of life', or to go beyond the limits of thought, by using up all the psychic power at one's command. Here logic turns into psychology, thought into conation and intuition. What could not be solved on the plane of empirical consciousness is now transferred to the deeper

<sup>1</sup> See D. T. Suzuki. *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider)

recesses of the mind. The kōan refuses to be solved by mere thinking or logic. One has to open a new eye to see things by bringing oneself into that oneness with the object of concentration which is the kōan. The following are some of the practical instructions regarding the kōan-exercise left by Zen masters:

‘O brother-monks! You may talk glibly and perhaps intelligently about Zen or Tao, and scoff at the Buddhas and Patriarchs; but when the day of reckoning comes, your lip-Zen will be of no avail. Thus far you have been beguiling others, but today you will find that you have been deceiving yourselves. O brother-monks! While still strong and healthy in body try to have a real understanding of what Zen is. After all, it is not such a difficult thing to grasp the lock, but because you have not made up your minds to die in the last ditch, if you do not find a way to realization, you say, “It is too difficult; it is beyond my power.” This is absurd! If you are really men of will, you will find out what your kōan means. A monk once asked Jyōshū, “Has a dog Buddha-nature?” to which the master answered, “Mu!” Now devote yourselves to this kōan and try to find its meaning. Devote yourselves to it day and night, whether sitting or lying, walking or standing, devote yourselves to its solution throughout the twelve periods. Even when dressing, taking meals or attending to your natural wants, have your every thought fixed on the kōan. Make resolute efforts to keep it always before your mind. Days pass, years roll on, but in the fullness of time when your mind is so attuned and recollected, there will be a sudden awakening within yourselves—an awakening into the mentality of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs. Then, for the first time, and wherever you may go, you will never again be beguiled by a Zen master.”<sup>1</sup>

‘An old saying runs. “When there is enough faith, there is enough doubt which is a great spirit of inquiry, and when

<sup>1</sup> *The Zenkōan Sakushin or Breaking Through the Frontier Gate*, as translated by D. T. Suzuki in *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), pp. 92-3.

there is a great spirit of inquiry, there is an illumination." Pour out everything that has accumulated in your mind—what you have learned or heard, false understanding, clever or witty sayings, the so-called truth of Zen, Buddha's teachings, self-conceit, arrogance and so on. Concentrate on the kōan, which you have not yet understood. That is to say, cross your legs firmly, hold your spine straight, and paying no attention to the time of day, keep up your concentration until like a living corpse you grow unaware of your whereabouts, of east, west, south and north. The mind moves in response to the outside world and knows when it is touched. The time will come when all thoughts cease to stir and there will be no working of consciousness. Then all of a sudden you smash your brain to pieces and for the first time realize that the truth is in your own possession and has been from the very beginning. Would not this be a great satisfaction to you in your daily life?<sup>1</sup>

"The truth (dharma) cannot be mastered by seeing, hearing and thinking. If it is, it is no more than seeing, hearing and thinking—it is not seeking after the truth itself. For the truth is not what you hear from others or learn through the understanding. Now keep yourself away from all that you have seen, heard and thought, and see what you have within yourself—emptiness only, nothingness, which eludes your grasp and to which you cannot fix your thought. Why? Because this is the place to which the senses can never reach. If this place were within their reach, it would be something you could think of and glimpse; it would then be something subject to the law of birth and death.

"The main thing is to shut off all your sense-organs and make your consciousness like a block of wood. When this block of wood suddenly stirs and makes a noise, that is the moment when you feel like a lion roaring in the wilds, or an elephant crossing a stream regardless of its swift current. At that moment

<sup>1</sup> *The Zenkōan Sakushū*, as translated by D. T. Suzuki.

there is no fidgeting, no doing, just this and no more. Says Hsiden the Elder:

"The celestial radiance undimmed,  
The norm lasting for ever more;  
For him who enters this gate,  
(There is) no reasoning, no learning "

'You should know that you enter the path by seeing, hearing and thinking and that by seeing, hearing and thinking you are also prevented from entering. Why? If you wield the double-bladed sword that destroys and resuscitates life in your seeing, hearing and thinking, you will be able to make good use of your eyes, ears and mind. But if the sword that cuts both ways, that destroys as well as resuscitates, is missing, your seeing, hearing and thinking will be a great stumbling-block, which will cause you to fall again and again to the ground. Your truth-eye will be completely blinded; you will be walking in complete darkness, not knowing how to be free and independent. If you want, however, to be the free master of yourself by doing away with your seeing, hearing and thinking, stop your hankering monkey-like mind from doing mischief; keep it quietly under control; keep it firmly collected regardless of what you are doing—sitting or lying, standing or walking, remaining silent or talking, keep your mind stretched taut like a line, do not let it slip out of your hand. Just as soon as it slips out of your control, you will find it in the service of seeing, hearing and thinking. In such a case, is there any remedy, and if so, what is it?

'A monk asked Ummon, "Who is the Buddha?" "The dried-up dirt-cleaner." This is the remedy; whether you are walking, sitting or lying, let your mind be perpetually fixed on this dirt-cleaner. The time will come when your mind will suddenly come to a stop like an old rat in a cul-de-sac. Then there will be a plunging into the unknown with the cry, "Ah, this!" When this cry is uttered, you have discovered yourself. You find at

the same time that all the teachings of the ancient worthies expounded in the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, the Taoist Scriptures and the Confucian Classics, are no more than commentaries upon your own sudden cry, "Ah, thus!"<sup>1</sup>

'If you want to get at the unadulterated truth of egolessness, you must once for all let go your hold and fall over the precipice. Then you will rise again newly awakened and in full possession of the four virtues of eternity, bliss, freedom and purity, which belong to the real ego. What does it mean to let go your hold on the precipice? Suppose a man has wandered in remote mountains, where no one else has ever ventured. He comes to the edge of a precipice unfathomably deep, the rugged rock covered with moss is extremely slippery, giving him no sure foothold; he can neither advance nor retreat and is looking death in the face. His only hope lies in holding on to the vine which his hands have grasped and his life depends on it. If carelessly he lets go his hold, he will fall into the abyss and be smashed to pieces. It is the same with the student of Zen. When he grapples single-handed with a kōan, he will come to see that he has reached the limit of his mental strength and he is brought to a standstill. Like the man hanging over the precipice, he is completely at a loss as to what to do next. Except for occasional feelings of uneasiness and despair, it is like death itself. Suddenly he finds his mind and body wiped out of existence, together with the kōan. This is what is known as "letting go your hold". As you awaken from the stupor and regain your breath, it is like drinking water and knowing for yourself that it is cold. It will be a joy inexpressible."<sup>2</sup>

The kōan exercise seems to have become popular after the compilation and printing of the *Hekiganroku* in 1125 by the

<sup>1</sup> *Dase's Sermons*, compiled by Sokel in 1190, as translated by D. T. Suzuki in *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), pp. 93-5.

<sup>2</sup> From the writings of Hakuin, the father of the modern Japanese Rinzai School of Zen as translated by D. T. Suzuki in *Essays in Zen Buddhism, Second Series* (Rider), p. 100.



disciples of the Master Engo. The *Hekiganroku* contains one hundred kōans, which are studied by Zen students in Japan most earnestly, even today, although their method of doing so is slightly different from that of olden times. The discussion on a kōan used to take place openly in the presence of many people, but nowadays in Japan it is carried on secretly in the master's room. This method was systematized by the Master Hakuin, who is regarded as the father of modern Rinzai Zen in Japan.

The answers to a kōan can be many, or rather numberless. There is, however, a traditional answer to each one, which will be revealed by the master to his pupils when they succeed in bringing a satisfactory answer in some form. And the way of presenting the answer can be classified thus:

1. Hoshin or Dharmakāya. If a kōan is to be answered in this form, the student has to repeat the statement, gesture, action or silence with which the teacher raised the kōan.

2. Kikan or application. When a student prefers to answer in this form, he has to illustrate or demonstrate it by acting some incident from daily life or by making use of something that happens to be within reach at the moment. Most irrational kōans are answered in this way.

3. Gonsen or verbal expression. If a kōan is to be answered in this form, one can make a short speech. But this speech must not be merely conceptual, just talking about the kōan. Zen is not concerned with abstractions, but deals with concrete facts, for that is what is meant by being in the state of oneness in life.

The order in which kōans are studied is that of the above classification of the ways in which they are answered. But there are five more steps in their study. They are:

4. Nantōnange or those difficult to pass through. One such kōan runs: 'A monk asked the Master Keishin of Chōsa, "Where has Nansen (his teacher) gone after his death?"' Replied the master, "When Sekitō was still a young novitiate, he saw the Sixth Patriarch."'

5. *Goi* or the five categories of Tōzan. The Master Tōzan Ryokai invented them. They are:

- i. *Shōchūhen*, or 'The absolute within the relative'.
- ii. *Henchūshō*, or 'The relative within the absolute'.
- iii. *Shōchūrai*, or 'The emanation from the absolute'.
- iv. *Kenchūshi*, or 'The identity of the absolute and the relative'.
- v. *Kenchūto*, or 'The undifferentiated oneness of all opposites'.

This type of kōan may be regarded as Zen dialectics, and it is not easy to comprehend without losing Zen intuition. Hence it is only recommended for study to those who have come through the previous stages.

6. *Jūyūkin*, or 'The ten heavier prohibitions'. This is the application in daily life of the Zen view on the ten Buddhist commandments. Zen is neither different from nor the same as Buddhist teaching in general, and this type of kōan was set for advanced students.

7. *Kidō-no-daibetsu*, or 'Kidō's remarks'. The Master Kidō commented on or answered the hundred kōans which he collected. The study of his remarks is encouraged among the monks belonging to the Takuyū School of Rinzai Zen as a review of one's understanding of Zen.

8. *Matsugo-no-rōkan*, or 'the last firm barrier'. This is generally a kōan which is made by each Zen master in order to test his advanced students for the last time. One of the examples runs: 'Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is said to manifest himself in thirty-three different bodies in order to save sentient beings. In how many bodies does a man of great training manifest?'



## Appendix I

### THE MU MON KWAN

*The Gateless Barrier to Zen Experience*

MUMON EKAI

*A Chinese Zen Master in the Thirteenth Century*

Translated from the Chinese by

SOHAKU OGATA



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## Introduction

- 1 This translation is based on the *Zudokko*, a Japanese edition of the text published in 1930.
- 2 It is primarily for the use of Western students who study Zen with Japanese teachers.
- 3 All proper names, therefore, are given as they are pronounced in Japanese. Those wishing to find their Chinese equivalents should consult Appendix III, where they are given in Chinese characters and in Roman letters, the transliteration being based on *Matthews' Chinese-English Dictionary*, American edition, 1932.
- 4 In most Japanese editions of the *Mu Mon Kwan* there are additions not found in the original and so untranslated here.





## Shūan's Preface

If it be said that there is no gate (by which to enter Zen) everyone on earth will enter by it; and if it be said that there is a gate, our master will find no ground on which to erect (the gateless barrier to Zen experience).

He has commented thoroughly (on the text) from beginning (to end) and this is like putting one hat on top of another.

I am urged to praise (the book by writing a preface). This, again, is (as foolish) as crushing a dry bamboo to get juice.

When one happens on a book of this kind, he is well advised to throw it away without waiting for (the advice of) an old man like myself, who would do just that. Let no drop (of juice) fall anywhere in the world. (Should it so fall) you will be unable (to recover it) even if (you try to) chase it on a horse that gallops a thousand miles (in an hour).

The last day of July Jyōtei 1 (1228)

Written by Shūan Chinken.



## A Memorial to the Throne

January 5, Jyōtei 11 (1229)

After respectfully greeting the sacred anniversary of the Founding of the Dynasty, Ekai, a humble servant of His Majesty and a Buddhist monk, on December 5, Jyōtei 1, in anticipation (of that sacred day), by publishing and commenting on a book containing forty-eight cases of how the Buddha and the Fathers attained Enlightenment, begs to be allowed to offer his congratulations to the Emperor.

Your Majesty the Emperor! May your Imperial Brightness be that of the sun and the moon! (May your) term of life be that of the universe! Let (the people) in the eight directions praise their virtuous sovereign.

Let (those on) the four seas enjoy the blessings of your effortless reign!

Most respectfully written by Ekai,  
humble servant of His Majesty, Dharma  
carrying monk,  
ex-abbot of  
Yuja Zen temple dedicated to Empress Ju.



## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO 'THE GATELESS BARRIER TO ZEN EXPERIENCE'

Buddha Mind (Zen) takes nothing as its source and has no gate to its doctrine. Tell me, if there is no gate, how can we approach (the teaching)? Have you not heard the saying, 'Nothing that enters by the gate is precious in the house: whatever is causally produced is always changing'?

(To tell) the stories (in this book) is like stirring up waves on a windless day or creating sores on healthy flesh. How much more (foolish) it is, when seeking to understand (the truth), to be impeded by words and phrases. It is like shaking a pole at the moon or scratching an itching foot through a boot. What could result (from so doing)?

In the summer of Jyōtei 1 (1228) I was head of the monks at Ryūshō monastery in eastern Ka. When they begged me for instruction, I took up the kōans of the ancients to make them serve as tiles for knocking at the gate. In guiding each student in accordance with his type, I have noted kōans at random which became, without plan, a good collection. There are forty-eight of them, but I have not arranged them in any order. I call the collection the *Mu Men Kwan*.

A brave man does not worry about losing his life, but comes to the point without ceremony. Even the eight-armed demon Nāga cannot stop him (in his progress). Even the twenty-eight (Patriarchs) of the western heaven (India) and the six (Fathers) of the eastern land (China) will (leave him alone) and in view of his bearing will beg for their lives. But if he hesitates to go straight to the point, it will be like looking through a window

at a rider on a galloping horse. In the wink of an eye the chance to see would be gone.

*The great highway has no gate,  
But there are thousands of by-paths  
When one passes the barrier  
One walks over heaven and earth.*

## ZEN SHU MU MON KWAN

(The Gateless barrier to Zen experience) compiled by Mien  
Sōshō, a monk pupil of the author.

### I

#### JYŌSHŪ'S 'MU'

The Master Jyōshū was once asked by a monk, 'Has a dog  
also Buddha-nature or not?'

Jyōshū said, 'Mu!'

*Mumon's comment:* In the study of Zen one has to pass the  
barriers erected by the ancient Fathers. (To attain) excellent  
enlightenment one has to exhaust the mind and block the path  
it follows. Those who have neither passed through the barriers  
of the Fathers nor exhausted the path of the mind are like souls  
standing by grasses and grasping trees.

Now what are the barriers (set up by the) Fathers? That of  
Zen Buddhism is this monosyllable 'Mu'. This (book) there-  
fore will be called the *Zen Shu Mu Mon Kwan* (The Gateless  
Barrier to Zen Experience).

Whoever passes (the barrier) will see the Master Jyōshū and  
also the Fathers, walking arm in arm and eyebrow to eyebrow  
with them, seeing with their eyes and hearing with their ears.  
Would it not be joyful to do so?

Surely someone wishes to pass the barrier? (If so) he should  
work at the question (asked in the kōan) with the three  
hundred and sixty bones and eighty-four thousand pores of his



body. He must force his way into the meaning of 'Mu', concentrating on it day and night. He must not think in terms of nihilism, nor of dualism. He must be like a man who has swallowed a pill of hot iron. Unable to spit it out, he must melt (with it) all his former wrong views and perceptions by working at it for a long time until he experiences for himself the identity of subject and object. Then like a dumb person in a dream he will admit to himself that he has experienced 'enlightenment'. When this happens suddenly, he astonishes heaven and shakes the earth. He is like a man who has snatched the commander-in-chief's sword at the barrier and holds it in his hand. He can kill Buddhas and the Fathers when he meets them, is gloriously free at the moment of his death and is absorbed in delight while transmigrating through the six states and four modes of life.

Now how do we arouse this intensity in ourselves? We just concentrate on the meaning of 'Mu' with all the strength of our being. If we keep this up without wavering the candle will suddenly burst into flame.

*A dog and Buddha-nature?  
The answer is in the question.  
If you think in terms of duality.  
You lose both body and life.*

## 2

## HYAKUJYO AND A FOX

Whenever the Master Hyakujo preached a sermon an old man listened to it with the monks and withdrew when they did. One day unexpectedly he did not withdraw, so the master asked, 'Who stands before me?'

'Sir,' he replied, 'I am not a human being. In the days of

Kāśyapa Buddha (the sixth of the seven past Buddhas) I was the head of this monastery. Once a monk asked me, "Is a man of great training subject to the (law of) causation, or not?" I said in reply, "He is not subject." (Because of this mistaken answer) I have been a fox for my last five hundred lives. Will you please say a turning word on my behalf and release me from my fox's body?"

He then asked, 'Is a man of great training still subject to (the law of) causation, or not?' The master replied, 'He does not get blinded by (the law of) causation.'

The old man was greatly enlightened by this instruction, made a (deep) bow of thanks and said: 'I have left my fox's body at the back of the mountain. Dare I ask you, master, to bury it as you would a monk?'

The master instructed the head monk to let all know that a funeral rite for a monk would be celebrated after the meal. The monks said, 'We are all well, there are no sick in the rest-house, what is it all about?' After the meal the master took them to the grotto behind the mountain, picked up a dead fox with his stick and cremated it.

That evening the master told the whole story in the sermon-hall. Ōbaku asked: 'The old man was turned into a fox for five hundred lives for giving a wrong answer. What would have happened to him if he had made no mistake (in answering) one (question) after another?'

The master said, 'Come forward and I will speak for him.' Ōbaku, therefore, stepped closer and slapped the master, who, clapping his hands and bursting into a hearty laugh, said, 'I thought that the barbarian (Bodhidharma) had a brown beard, but here is another brown-bearded barbarian.'

*Mumon's comment.* Why did he become a fox as a result of his answer about being subject to (the law of) causation? Why was he freed from the fox's (body by the words of the master) about not getting blinded by (the law of) causation? If you can see

(the answer) by opening the third eye, you will understand how the former (master) at Hyakujyo monastery was happy during his five hundred lives (as a fox).

*Not to fall into (error) and not being blinded (thereby)  
Are the two sides of a coin.*

*Not getting blinded and not falling (into error)  
Are mistakes, mistakes, nothing but mistakes.*

## 3

## GUTEI LIFTS A FINGER

The Master Gutei simply raised a finger whenever he was asked a question. Towards the end of his life his boy (attendant) was asked by a stranger, 'What doctrine does your master teach?' The boy raised a finger. When Gutei heard of this he cut off the (lad's) finger with a knife. The boy ran out screaming with pain. Gutei called him by name and when the boy turned back raised a finger: the boy suddenly grasped (the truth).

Just before Gutei died he said to the monks, 'I have used this finger-Zen all my life since I received it from (my teacher) Tenryu, but I have not yet finished with it.' No sooner had he spoken than he died.

*Mumon's comment:* What Gutei and the boy understood had nothing to do with a finger. If you can see (the truth) of this (you will realize that) Tenryu, Gutei, the boy and yourself are threaded on one string.

*Gutei set old Tenryu at naught  
And tested the boy with a sharp knife.  
A giant spirit raised his hand without ceremony  
And broke off (part of the range) to make Mount Hua.*

## 4

## THE BARBARIAN HAS NO BEARD

Wakuan said: 'Why has the barbarian (Bodhidharma) from the western heaven (India) no beard?'

*Mumon's comment:* Zen study must be the real thing, enlightenment must be genuine. You can see this barbarian for the first time when you see him in yourself. When you talk of seeing him there, you have already fallen into dualism.

*Don't discuss a dream  
In the presence of a fool,  
The barbarian has no beard.  
What nonsense this is.*

## 5

## KYŌGEN CLIMBS A TREE

The Master Kyōgen said: '(Zen) is like a man up a tree who hangs on a branch by his teeth with his hands and feet in the air. A man at the foot of the tree asks him, "What is the point of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" If he does not answer he would seem to evade the question. If he answers he would fall to his death. In such a predicament what answer would you give?'

*Mumon's comment:* It is useless to be gifted with a flowing stream of eloquence as to discourse on the teaching in the great

Tripitaka. Whoever answers this question (correctly) can give life to the dead and take life from the living. If you (cannot) you must wait for the coming of Maitreya (the future Buddha) and ask (him for the answer).

*Kyōgen is really outrageous.  
The poison (he brewed) spreads everywhere.  
It closes the mouths of Zen monks  
And makes their eyes goggle.*

## 6

## THE BUDDHA AND A FLOWER

A long time ago when the World Honoured One was dwelling on Vulture Peak, He picked up a flower and showed it to the congregation. They all remained unmoved, but the venerable Mahākāśyapa smiled. The Honoured One said: 'I have in my hand the doctrine of the right Dharma which is birthless and deathless, the true form of no-form and a great mystery. It is the message of non-dependance upon (words) and letters and is transmitted outside the scriptures. I now hand it to Mahākāśyapa.'

*Mumon's comment:* Golden-faced Gautama behaved outrageously. He reduced the sublime to the simple. He sold dog meat for mutton and thought it wonderful to do so. Had the whole congregation smiled, to whom would he have transmitted the right Dharma? Had Mahākāśyapa not smiled, to whom would he have transmitted it? If you say that the right Dharma can be transmitted, the golden-faced old man deceived the world. If it cannot be, how could he give the message even to Mahākāśyapa?

*When he held up a flower  
His secret was revealed.  
When Mahākāśyapa smiled  
No one in heaven or on earth knew what to make of it.*

## 7

## JYŌSHŪ'S WASHING-BOWL

Jyōshū was once asked by a monk 'I am a novice who has just come to this monastery. Will you please instruct me, master?'

Jyōshū: 'Have you breakfasted yet?'

Monk: 'I have had my breakfast.'

Jyōshū: 'Then wash out your bowl.'

The monk was at once enlightened.

*Mumon's comment:* When Jyōshū opened his mouth, he (spoke plainly enough), showing his heart, gall and liver. Had the monk failed to understand the truth, he would have mistaken the temple bell for a pitcher.

*What is very clear  
Is heedlessly neglected:  
Light is fire, as you see:  
The rice has been cooking a long time.*

## 8

## KEICHŪ AND THE CHARIOTS

The Master Getsuan asked a monk: 'Keichū made one hundred chariots. After taking off the two wheels and removing the axle what is left to be seen?'

*Mumon's comment:* If you can see at once, your eyes are like shooting stars and your mind moves like lightning.

*Even the expert is puzzled  
When the wheel turns round;  
Four corners, up and down,  
South, north, east and west.*

## 9

## DAITSŪ CHISHŌ BUTSU

The Master Seijō of Kōyō was once asked by a monk: 'Daitō Chishō Butsu sat in the meditation hall for ten kalpas without the Buddha-dharma dawning in him or attaining enlightenment. What was the matter with him?'

Seijō: 'Your question answers itself.'

Monk: 'He sat in the meditation hall (for such a long time). Why did he not attain the goal of Buddhism?'

Seijō: 'Because he did not understand the Buddha-dharma.'

*Mumon's comment:* It is easy to know the old barbarian, but it is not easy to understand him. When an ordinary monk knows the truth, he is wise and when a wise man understands (the truth), he is ordinary again.

*It is better to set the mind at rest than the body:  
When the mind is at rest the body knows no worry.  
When both mind and body are resting  
What is the point of making the hermit a duke?*

## SEIZEI, A SOLITARY MONK

The Master Sōzan was once asked by a monk: 'I am alone and poor. Will you please help me, master?'

Sōzan: 'Venerable Seizei.'

Seizei: 'Yes, master.'

Sōzan: 'Having taken three cups of spirit from the White House at Seigen you pretend not to have wet your lips yet.'

*Mumon's comment:* Why did Seizei pretend to be alone and poor? Sōzan had the insight to realize who his visitor was. Be that as it may, just tell me what is meant by the venerable Seizei drinking spirit.

*As poor as Hantan  
Yet as brave as Kōu.  
He may have no means  
Yet he dares rival the wealthiest.*

## JYŌSHŪ EXAMINES HERMITS

Jyōshū came to a hermit's place and asked, 'Are you in, are you in?' The hermit held up his fist, whereupon Jyōshū said, 'The water is too shallow for a vessel to anchor.'

Coming to another hermit's place Jyōshū again asked, 'Are you in, are you in?' This hermit also held up his fist and Jyōshū said, '(This man is free to) loose, snatch, kill or give life.' And he bowed politely.



*Mumon's comment:* They both held up their fists alike. Why did he approve of one and not of the other? Where lies the distinction? If you can give a turning answer, you will see that Jyōshū's tongue is boneless (so that he talks out of both sides of his mouth), and that he arbitrarily helps (a man) to stand up or pushes him down.

Be that as it may, how can it be denied that Jyōshū was impressed differently by the two hermits? Yet if one grades them he does not yet see with the eye of Zen. And if another says that there is nothing to choose between them, he also does not see with the eye of Zen.

*The eye (of Zen) dazzles like a shooting-star,  
The activity (of Zen) is swift as lightning.  
Zen is the sword that can kill,  
Zen is the sword that can give life to a man.*

## 12

## ZUIGAN TALKS TO HIMSELF

The Master Zuigan Shigen used to talk to himself every day.

'Hullo, master!'

'Yes, here I am.'

'Wake up, wake up!'

'Yes, I have.'

'In future don't be deceived by others.'

'No, I won't.'

*Mumon's comment:* Old Zuigan makes and sells to himself many masks of ghosts and goblins. Why? (He wears) one when he calls, another when he answers; one when he is awake and

another when he wishes to avoid being deceived by others. It does no good to know them. If you imitate him, your outlook will be that of a fox.

*Zen students cannot see the truth  
While they cherish the old concept of God.  
From time out of mind (that idea) has been at the root of life and  
death,  
Yet foolish men regard it as the original man.*

## 13

## TOKUSAN CARRIES HIS BOWL

Tokusan once went to the dining-hall with his bowl. Seppō said: 'Dear master, the bell has not rung yet, nor the gong sounded. Where are you going with your bowl?' And Tokusan returned to the abbot's quarter.

Seppō told this to Ganto who said, 'Master though he is, Tokusan has not yet understood the last word (of Zen)'

When Tokusan heard of this he told his attendant to call Ganto, whom he asked, 'Don't you approve of me?'

Ganto whispered what he had meant and Tokusan made no reply.

The next day (Tokusan) mounted the pulpit and his lecture, to be sure, was not like his usual ones. Ganto, moving to the front of the hall, clapped his hands, laughed heartily and said: 'Our old man, to my joy, has understood the last word (in Zen). No man under heaven will ever challenge him again.'

*Mumon's comment:* Neither Ganto nor Tokusan have seen or even dreamed the last word (in Zen) When I observe them carefully, they are like puppets in a Punch and Judy show.

*When one realizes the first  
 One understands the last word (in Zen).  
 The last and the first  
 Are not the same word.*

## 14

## NANSEN STABS A CAT

The Master Nansen (noticed that the monks) from the eastern and western halls were fighting over (the ownership) of a cat. Nansen, therefore, seized it and said: 'If any of you Brethren can speak (a word of Zen), I will save the cat's life. If you cannot I will stab it.'

The monks were at a complete loss, so Nansen stabbed it (to death). That evening Jyōshū returned and Nansen told (him of the incident). Jyōshū took off his sandals, put them on his head and walked out of the room.

Said Nansen, 'If you had been there I could have saved the cat.'

*Mumon's comment:* Tell me what Jyōshū meant by putting his sandals on his head. Whoever can give the turning solution will see that Nansen's demand was not made without reason. Whoever cannot do so is in danger.

*Had Jyōshū been there  
 He would have enforced the demand differently.  
 Had he snatched the knife  
 Nansen would have had to beg for his own life.*

## TÖZAN GETS CONFUSED

Ummon once gave a Zen interview to Tōzan and asked him, 'Where do you come from?'

Tōzan: 'From Sado, sir.'

Ummon: 'Where were you in the summer?'

Tōzan: 'At Hōji monastery on South Lake.'

Ummon: 'When did you leave?'

Tōzan: 'On August the twenty-fifth.'

Ummon: 'You deserve to be beaten sixty times.'

Next day Tōzan went up to see the master again and said, 'Yesterday I was told that I deserved to be beaten sixty times, but I cannot see where I was at fault.'

Ummon: 'O this rice-bag (this good-for-nothing fellow)! What is the point of wandering from the west of the river to the south of the lake?' Tōzan was immediately enlightened.

*Mumon's comment:* Ummon gave Tōzan the proper food and let him discover (by himself) the way to living action. For the family has to be caused distress (in this way). Next morning when Tōzan returned after a night of struggle in the sea of (dualism, of) right and wrong, (Ummon) made the same comment again. Although Tōzan had not a quick mind, he was immediately enlightened.

Now let me ask you, brethren: Did Tōzan deserve sixty blows or not? If you say yes, everything in the monastery including the grass and trees should be beaten. If you say no, it would seem that Ummon has talked wildly. But if you can see the truth here, you will breathe with Tōzan's mouth.

*A lioness trains her cubs as a mother should,  
 Pretending to go out she dodges quickly.  
 (Tōzan) was shot twice in the head,  
 The first arrow struck light, but the second struck deep.*

## 16

## BELL-SOUNDING AND ROBINING

Ummon said: 'The world is very wide. Why do we put on the seven striped robe (of ceremony) when we hear the temple bell?'

*Mumon's comment:* As a rule when studying Zen and learning Tao we are strictly (forbidden) to follow voices and chase colours. Even if one may be led to realize Tao by following a voice, or to comprehend Mind by seeing a colour, one is still in the dark. For you cannot see with (the insight of) a Zen adept unless you are free from (hearing) voices and (seeing) colours and know at all times how to play the game.

Tell me whether sound comes to the ear or the ear goes to sound. How do you cope with any situation if you forget both sound and silence? You will find it difficult to comprehend if you hear with your ears, but not if you listen with your eyes.

*All things are one when you understand (Zen)  
 And separate when you do not.  
 All things are one when you misunderstand Zen  
 And separate when you do.*

## THE NATIONAL TEACHER CALLS THRICE

The National Teacher (Echū) called thrice to his attendant, who answered him each time. The National Teacher said, 'I thought I was being insensible to your (favour), whereas you from the start were being insensible to mine.'

*Mumon's comment:* By calling three times the National Teacher wore his tongue down to the root, while his attendant became hoarse from replying. The National Teacher has become too old and weak-minded (like a man who) holds the head of his cow when feeding her hay. The attendant did not relish (such treatment). Even fine food does not please a man with no appetite.

Tell me what is meant by being insensible to favour. Men of talent are honoured when the country is well ruled and children become boastful when the family is rich.

*(Since) someone has to carry solid iron fetters  
The trouble embarrassing future generations is not small.  
If you want to attain the door of Zen  
You must scale with bare feet a mountain of swords.*

## TÔZAN'S THREE CATTIES OF HEMP

The Master Tōzan was once asked by a monk, 'What is Buddha?'

Tōzan: 'Three catties of hemp.'

*Mumon's comment:* Old Tōzan has studied Zen a little (and like) a clam opening its shell he exposes his liver and bowels. However, tell me where was Tōzan.

*The answer 'three catties of hemp' was simple,  
Sincere and full of meaning.  
Whoever gossips  
Will be gossiped about.*

## 19

## ORDINARY MIND IS TAO

Nansen was once asked by Jyōshū, 'What is Tao?'

Nansen: 'Ordinary mind is Tao.'

Jyōshū: 'Should we try to get it?'

Nansen: 'As soon as you try you miss it.'

Jyōshū: 'How do we know without trying?'

Nansen: 'Tao is beyond both knowing and not knowing. Knowing is false perception and not knowing is lack of awareness. When one attains to Tao it is certain that one will see it as clearly as one sees the vastness of the universe. Then what is the use of arguing about it?'

At these words Jyōshū was suddenly enlightened.

*Mumon's comment:* When Nansen was questioned by Jyōshū he left (the realm of) forms and (passed) beyond all bounds. Even though Jyōshū was immediately enlightened, he will reach (that state) for the first time after studying Zen for more than thirty years.

*Hundreds of flowers in spring and the moon in autumn,  
A cool breeze in summer and snow in winter:  
Every season is a good season for you  
Unless you cherish an idle thought in your mind.*

## 20

## A MAN OF GREAT STRENGTH

The Master Shōgen said, 'Why does a man of great strength not stand up without (using) his feet?' And, 'The tongue has nothing to do with speaking.'

*Mumon's comment:* Shōgen seems to have (spoken plainly enough), emptying his bowels and turning his belly inside out, and yet no one can follow him. If a man comes to Mumon (wishing) to follow him, he will only be beaten by him. Why? Because pure gold must be tested in fire.

*When he kicks the Pacific Ocean spills over,  
When he bows his head he looks down on the Milky Way.  
There is no place where he can put all his body—  
Please end the verse.*

## 21

## UMMON'S DIRT-CLEANER

A monk once asked Ummon, 'What is Buddha?'  
Ummon replied, 'A dirt-cleaner.'



*Mumon's comment:* Ummon seems to have been so poor that he could hardly manage simple meals. (When questioned) he was too busy to make (an answer). He had to use the dirt-cleaner to support the house (of Zen). We shall see whether the Buddha-dharma prospers or decays.

*(Laks) a lightning flash  
And sparks when stones are struck  
(Zen) goes past  
In the blink of an eye.*

## 22

# MAHĀKĀŚYAPA AND THE TEMPLE BANNER

Mahākāśyapa was once asked by Ānanda, 'What did the World Honoured One (the Buddha) give you in addition to the brocade robe (of succession)?'

Mahākāśyapa, 'Ānanda!'

Ānanda: 'Yes, sir.'

Mahākāśyapa: 'Pull down the banner in front of the gate.'<sup>1</sup>

*Mumon's comment:* If you can give the turning solution you will see that the gathering on Vulture Peak has not yet broken up. If you cannot you will be unable to understand the mystery even if you have thought about it from the time of Vipāśyin Buddha to the present day.

<sup>1</sup> In ancient China it was customary to fly a banner in the temple grounds when a sermon was to be given. Hence to pull down the banner meant that the sermon was over.

*The answer is far better than the question,  
But many people have failed to see the point.  
Give and take between brothers in the dharma  
Reveals spring time in another world.*

## 23

## THINK NOT OF GOOD OR EVIL

The Sixth Patriarch (Enō) was once followed by the monk Emyō to Daiyū mountain. On Emyō's approach he threw the robe and bowl on a rock, saying 'This robe signifies the faith. How can it be right to fight for it? I will leave it for you to take.'

Emyō tried to pick the robe up, but it was as immovable as a mountain. Terrified and staggering he said: 'I came for the dharma not the robe. Please teach me, my lay brother.'

The Patriarch said: 'Think not of good or evil. What at the moment is your original face, brother Emyō?'

Emyō was greatly enlightened. Perspiration broke out all over his body, he burst into tears, bowed and said, 'Is there any other message apart from these esoteric words and ideas?'

The Patriarch: 'What I have told you is not esoteric. On the contrary if you reflect upon your own face you will see that what is esoteric lies within yourself.'

Emyō: 'Although I have been one of the monks under Ōbai I have not really understood my own face. Thanks to your guidance I am like one who has drunk water and realizes for himself how cold or warm it is. You are now my teacher, lay brother.'

The Patriarch: 'If you think so, why don't we both claim Ōbai as our spiritual teacher? Take very good care of yourself.'

*Mumon's comment:* The Sixth Patriarch seems to have acted in a great hurry. He was as kind as a grandmother who peels a lichee, removes the stone and puts (the fruit) in a child's mouth, so that he swallows it.

*You cannot describe it or draw it,  
You cannot praise it fully nor perceive it.  
No place can be found in which to put the original face;  
It will not disappear even when the universe is destroyed.*

## 24

## WITHOUT SPEECH, WITHOUT SILENCE

The Master Fuketsu was once asked by a monk, 'Since both speech and silence are concerned either with affirmation or negation, how can we avoid violating (the way in which Truth manifests as such)?'

Fuketsu: 'I always think of the view of the south river in March, when birds are singing and flowers are at their best.'

*Mumon's comment:* Fuketsu's wit is like lightning. He finds the way to move along. But, much to my regret, he is quoting some old (poem) and cannot get rid of it. If you can see the point clearly, you will see the way to perfect freedom.

*Without using extravagant language  
(The message) is given before it is spoken.  
Truly there is little point  
In chattering glibly on and on.*

## A SERMON FROM THE THIRD SEAT

The Master Gyōzan had a dream. He went to the abode of Maitreya and sat on the third seat. A venerable monk hit the gavel and announced, 'Today's sermon will be given by the monk in the third seat.' Then Gyōzen stood up, hit the gavel and said, 'The teaching of the Mahāyāna is beyond the four propositions and transcends the one hundred negations. Listen! Listen!'

*Mumon's comment:* Tell me whether or not this was a sermon. If you open your mouth (to preach) you fail (to be right): if you keep it shut you fail as well. If you neither open nor close it you are 108,000 miles (from being right).

*On a fine day under a blue sky  
In a dream he talks of dreaming.  
Fabrication, fabrication!  
He makes fools of all the monks.*

## TWO MONKS ROLL UP THE SCREEN

Once when the Master Hōgen of Shōryo (monastery) was visited by a monk before dinner, he pointed to the bamboo screen which was hanging loose. Two monks went to roll it up. Hōgen said, 'One is good but not the other.'

*Mumon's comment:* Tell me which one was good and which not. If you can look at this properly you will see the mistake made by Shōryo's National Teacher.

Be that as it may it is strictly forbidden to discuss the question of good and not-good.

*A clear sky was revealed by rolling up (the screen),  
Yet even the vast sky does not represent (Zen) completely.  
Why should we not throw everything away?  
Let (subject and object) be one so that the wind cannot pass between  
them.*

## 27

## NEITHER MIND NOR BUDDHA

The Master Nansen was once asked by a monk, 'Is there any teaching which you have not yet preached to others?'

Nansen: 'Yes, there is.'

Monk: 'What is that teaching?'

Nansen: 'It is neither mind, nor Buddha, nor a thing.'

*Mumon's comment:* Nansen had to use all his reserves to answer the question. He was quite confused.

*Repetition spoils the merit of a superior man;  
Truly it is better to be silent.  
Even though the blue sea turn (into a mountain)  
You can never be shown the teaching.*

## FAMOUS RYŪTAN

Ryūtan was once visited by Tokusan, who waited for instruction (in Zen) until night fell. Ryūtan said, 'It is getting late, why don't you withdraw?'

Tokusan said at last, 'Good night,' and lifting up the hanging screen went out. Noticing that it was dark he turned and said, 'It is dark outside.'

Ryūtan lit the candle-lantern and handed it to Tokusan. When Tokusan was about to take it, Ryūtan blew out the light, whereupon Tokusan suddenly had the sense of enlightenment and bowed.

Ryūtan: 'What sort of insight have you gained?'

Tokusan: 'From now on I shall not doubt the sayings of the great masters in the world.'

Next day Ryūtan mounted the pulpit and said: 'Among the monks here there is a man whose teeth are like swords and whose mouth is as a bowl full of blood. He will not duck his head even if you beat him with a stick. Some day he will give out my teaching on a lone mountain peak.'

Tokusan then brought the commentaries (on the *Diamond Sūtra*) to the front of the Dharma Hall and, holding a burning torch, said, 'However deep your knowledge of the hidden teaching of (the sūtra) it is like a strand of hair in the vastness of space; however important your wordly experience it is but a drop of water falling into a deep ravine.'

Taking up the commentaries he set fire to them and left full of gratitude.

*Mumon's comment:* Before Tokusan left his native place he was eager to go south in triumph, expecting to explode the doctrine of a special transmission outside the scriptures. On the road in

Wei Shū he (stopped at a tea-house and) asked the old waitress if he could buy (some food) to sharpen his mind.<sup>1</sup> The old woman said, 'Venerable monk, what books do you carry in your satchel?'

Tokusan: 'They are commentaries on the *Diamond Sūtra*.'

Old woman, 'As it is said in the sūtra a past, present and future thought are each inconceivable. What thought are you going to sharpen, venerable monk?'

At this question Tokusan pursed his lips like a flat stick and, pretending not to be defeated, asked her at last, 'Is there a Zen master in the neighbourhood?'

'The Master Ryūtan lives five miles away,' said the old woman.

When he came (and questioned) Ryūtan he was completely defeated. His former attitude, I should say, was inconsistent with his final stand. Ryūtan was like a man who feels no disgrace in taking care of a child. For on finding the child with a spark of fire, he hurriedly takes muddy water and pours it all on the spark to quench it. To my calm way of thinking this is a matter for much laughter.

*To see someone's face is better than to hear of (his) fame,  
To hear of the fame is better than to see the face.  
Although he saved his nose  
He lost his eye. What a pity!*

## 29

### NEITHER WIND NOR BANNER

The Sixth Patriarch (Enō) once found two monks arguing under the temple banner as it moved in the wind.

<sup>1</sup> A lunch or snack is called *t'ue-hsin* in Chinese, meaning 'to sharpen mind'

One said, 'The banner is moving.'

The other, 'The wind is moving.'

Contradicting (each other) thus they could not agree.

The Patriarch said, 'What moves is neither wind nor banner but your mind.' And the two monks were struck with terror.

*Mumon's comment.* What moves is neither wind, banner nor mind. What was the matter with the Patriarch? If you can see this clearly, you will see that the two monks received gold for iron, while the Patriarch blundered by being unable to remain indifferent.

*Wind, banner and mind*

*Must all be spared.*

*When you speak out*

*You are unaware of speaking loosely.*

### 30

## MIND IS BUDDHA

Baso was once asked by Daibai, 'What is Buddha?'  
'The mind is Buddha,' said Baso.

*Mumon's comment:* Whoever understands (the truth) directly wears a Buddha's robe, eats a Buddha's food, speaks a Buddha's words and lives a Buddha's life: he is a Buddha.

Be that as it may, Daibai misleads many people by making them watch the mark on a pair of scales. How, then, can we



make sense of the old saying that one should rinse out the mouth for three days after uttering the name of Buddha? If he is a (real Zen) monk, he will cover his ears and run on hearing someone say 'The mind is Buddha.'

*Under a blue sky on a fine day  
No one should ask about the weather.  
He asks, 'What is Buddha?'  
What an impudent rascal he is!*

## 31

## JYŌSHŪ EXAMINES AN OLD WOMAN

A monk from Jyōshū's (monastery) once asked an old woman, 'Which road should I take for Gotaisan?'

'Go straight ahead,' said the old woman. After the monk had walked three or four paces she added, 'How stupid he is to go like that?'

Afterwards some monk told the story to Jyōtsū, who said, 'Wait a moment and I will go to examine the old woman for you.'

Next day he went and asked her the same question and she gave the same answer as before. Coming home, Jyōshū said to the monks, 'I have examined the old woman at Gotaisan for you.'

*Mumon's comment:* The old woman knows how to plan a campaign on paper, but not how to catch a spy who is after her. Old Jyōshū crept well into the (enemy's) camp and menaced the fortress, but he is unworthy to be called a great man. Upon

thorough investigation I find them both to be at fault. Tell me what is meant by Jyōshū examining the old woman.

*As the questions were alike  
So were the answers.  
When there is sand in the cooked rice  
There is a stick in the drain.*

## 32

## A HERETIC VISITS BUDDHA

A heretic once said to the World Honoured One, 'I do not ask you for a sermon in words or for a wordless sermon.'

The World Honoured One just sat all by himself. The heretic said in his praise, 'The World Honoured, the Great Compassionate One has dispelled the cloud of my delusion and has let me have (enlightenment).' Completing the salutation he went away.

Later Ānanda asked the Buddha, 'What did the heretic attain and did he praise you when he left?'

The World Honoured One said, 'He is like a high-mettled horse that starts on seeing the shadow of a whip.'

*Mumon's comment:* Ānanda, though a disciple of the Buddha, came to understand no better than the heretic. Tell me, what is the difference between them?

*Walking on sword blades;  
Running over ice floes;  
No climbing up steps;  
No hanging on to cliffs.*

## NO MIND, NO BUDDHA

Baso was once asked by a monk, 'What is Buddha?'  
He replied, 'There is no mind, no Buddha.'

*Mumon's comment:* To see the truth here is the end of Zen study.

*Give (a sword) to a fencing-master,  
Do not give a poem to a man who is not a poet.  
In conversation reveal one third,  
Never give out the whole.*

## WISDOM IS NOT TAO

Nansen said, 'Mind is not Buddha, wisdom is not Tao.'

*Mumon's comment:* Nansen seems to have been as indiscreet as an old man. By talking nonsense he washes his dirty linen in public.

Be that as it may, there are only a few people who know how to be grateful (to Nansen).

*The sun is revealed when it is fine,  
The earth gets moisture when it rains,  
The truth is explained to the heart's content  
And yet there are some people whose faith is insufficient.*

## SEIRŌ'S SOUL LEAVES HER

Goso asked a monk: 'Seirō's soul has left her Which is real (soul or body)?'

*Mumon's comment:* If one can distinguish what is real in this case, he will see that transmigration is like coming out of one shell and entering another, like putting up in one hotel (after another). If he cannot see this, when the time comes for his body to dissolve (in death), he should be careful not to become confused like a crab dropped into boiling water and struggling with all its arms and legs. Now you cannot say that you have not been warned.

*Cloud and moon high in the sky,  
Valleys and hills below on the earth.  
How wonderful, wonderful!  
One is two and two are one.*

## MEETING A MASTER

Goso said: 'When you meet a master in the street you should not greet him with words or without words. How then should you treat him?'

*Mumon's comment.* If you can behave properly here, you will be delighted (to meet a master). If you cannot you are strongly advised to be careful wherever you go.

*When meeting a master in the street  
Do not greet him with words or without words.  
Feeling a slap in the face  
You will wake up to comprehension (of the truth).*

## 37

## AN OAK TREE IN THE GARDEN

Jyōshū was once asked by a monk, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"

Jyōshū: 'The oak tree in the garden.'

*Mumon's comment:* If you can see correctly what Jyōshū meant by his answer, there will be no Śākya before and no Maitreya behind you.

*Words do not represent facts,  
Statements mislead for catching the point.  
Those who follow words lose their lives,  
Those trapped by statements get lost.*

## 38

## A BUFFALO THROUGH A WINDOW

Goso said. 'Let me give you an illustration. A water buffalo is going out through a window. Her head, horns and hoofs are through but her tail cannot pass. Why is this?'

*Mumon's comment:* If anyone can open an eye on this, he will show gratitude to his four benefactors (the ruler of the state, parents, fellow beings and the three treasures, Buddha, dharma and sangha) and will help beings in the three worlds (the realms of desires, forms and no form). If he cannot do so he will have to watch the tail until it gets through.

*If she goes through she will fall into a ditch,  
If she turns back she will be butchered.  
This single tail!  
What could it be?*

## 39

## UMMON POINTS OUT A FAULT

Ummon was once told by a monk, 'The light that illumines the world is dim.' Before the monk could finish the verse Ummon suddenly interrupted, 'Surely that is by the genius Chōsetsu?'

Monk: 'Yes, sir.'

Ummon: 'You have made a mistake.'

Many years later Shishin took this up saying, 'Tell me what was the monk's mistake.'

*Mumon's comment:* Anyone who sees how remote and subtle was Ummon's way and what mistake the monk made, is worthy to teach on earth and in heaven. But if he is not yet clear on both points he will be unable to help himself.

*When you fish in a swift stream  
 You catch greedy fish.  
 As soon as they open their mouths to grab the bait  
 Their lives are taken away.*

## 40

## KICKING OVER A PITCHER

The Master Yisan started as monastery cook under Hyakujo. Now Hyakujo had to select a master for the great monastery at Isan. He summoned everyone, including the head monk, and told them that whoever answered the (Zen) question most ably would be sent.

Taking up a pitcher he placed it on the floor saying, 'If you cannot call this a pitcher, what would you call it?'

The chief monk 'One cannot call it a stump.'

Hyakujo: 'What would you call it, Yisan?' Yisan kicked the pitcher over and went out.

Hyakujo, laughing: 'The chief monk was carried out by brother Yisan.' And so Yisan was made the first master (of the newly established monastery).

*Mumon's comment:* Dauntless as he is, Yisan cannot jump out of Hyakujo's trap. When I examine him, he makes heavy weather of it. Why? He drops the chopping-board and takes up an iron fetter.

*Throwing down the baskets and ladles  
 And removing all obstacles,  
 Yisan escaped the trap Hyakujo set  
 And kicked down all the Buddhas.*

## BODHIDHARMA AND PACIFYING MIND

Bodhidharma sat facing the wall. The Second Patriarch (Eka), who had been standing in the snow (waiting for an interview) cut off one of his arms and said: 'My mind is not at peace. Master, pray pacify my mind.'

Bodhidharma: 'Bring me your mind and I will set it at rest.'

The Patriarch: 'I have searched for but cannot find it.'

Bodhidharma: 'I have set your mind at rest.'

*Mumon's comment:* The broken-toothed barbarian (Bodhidharma) came hundreds of thousands of miles across the sea proudly (to China), seeming to stir up waves on a windless day. Later he instructed a pupil and crippled him. Alas, the fisherman does not know his A B C.

*A direct message from the west*

*Is in this story:*

*The trouble maker for Zen monasteries*

*Is you, the guilty one (Bodhidharma).*

## A WOMAN IN MEDITATION

Once long ago Mañjuśrī joined a large assembly of Buddhas. When they dispersed a woman remained sitting in meditation



by the seat of (Śākyamuni) Buddha. Mañjuśrī asked, 'Why may the woman sit beside the Buddhas and not I?'

The Buddha: 'Why don't you rouse her from her meditation and ask her yourself?'

Mañjuśrī walked round the woman three times, snapped his fingers, flew up to the Brahmāna Heaven and used all his supernatural powers, but he could not make the woman come out of her meditation.

The Buddha: 'Even if hundreds of thousands of Mañjuśrīs tried, they would not disturb her meditation. But in a land many millions of miles beyond here lives a Bodhisattva called Mōmyō. He can make her come out of her meditation.'

In a flash the great Mōmyō sprang from the earth and bowed in homage to the Buddha. On instruction he snapped his fingers in the woman's face and she came out of her meditation.

*Mumon's comment:* Old Śākya gave a thoroughly bad performance. Tell me why Mañjuśrī, who teaches the seven Buddhas, could not make a woman come out of her meditation, while Mōmyō, a Bodhisattva of the first grade, could. Whoever can see the point here will realize that to live in this busy world is the same as being in the meditational state of the great Nāga (king).

*Coming out and staying in:  
Let them do as they please.  
Goblin heads and ghost masks:  
Losing games are also fun.*

## SHUZAN'S STAFF

The Master Shuzan held up a staff and said to the monks:  
 'If you call this a staff, you are caught by (its name). If you do not call this a staff, you contradict (reality). Tell me, brethren, what do you call it?'

*Mumon's comment:* If you call this a staff, you are caught by (its name). If you do not call this a staff, you contradict (reality). Don't describe it in words, don't describe it without words. Speak quickly! Speak quickly!

*Holding up a staff*

*He urges: 'Come on, come on!'*

*(Faced with) the alternative of being caught or contradicting*

*Even the Buddhas and Fathers would beg for their lives.*

## BASHŌ'S STICK

The Master Bashō said to the monks, 'If you have a stick, I will give you another. If you have no stick, I will take it away.'

*Mumon's comment:* With its aid I cross the broken bridge over a stream: with it I return to my village on a moonless

night. If you call it a stick, you will be shot into hell as quickly as an arrow.

*With it in my hand I distinguish  
Between what is deep or shallow.  
It supports heaven and earth  
And causes Zen to be taught wherever it stands.*

## 45

## WHO IS HE?

The Master Hōen of the eastern mountain said: 'Śākya and Maitreya are his servants. Who is he?'

*Mumon's comment:* Whoever sees him clearly feels as if he has met his own father at the cross roads. He has no need to ask others if he is right or wrong.

*Do not use other men's bows,  
Do not ride their horses.  
Do not bother with other men's evils,  
Do not interfere in their affairs.*

## 46

## FROM THE TOP OF A POLE

The Master Sekisō asked, 'How can you climb a step above the top of a pole one hundred feet high?'

Another ancient master said 'A man sitting on the top of a hundred-foot pole cannot be regarded as a true (man) however great his attainment may be. (The true man) should climb a step above the top of the pole and let his whole body be present in all the worlds.'

*Mumon's comment:* Whoever climbs a step above (the top of a hundred-foot pole) and turns a somersault will be respected wherever he goes.

Be that as it may, tell me how you climb a step above the top of a pole a hundred feet high.

*A man who has lost the sight of his eye (of Zen)*

*Mistakes the mark on a pair of scales (as the measurement of everything)*

*A man who has given up his body and life*

*Leads others like a blind man guiding the blind.*

## 47

### THE THREE TRAPS OF TOSOTSU

The Master Jyûetsu of Tosotsu made three traps for examining students.

1. The only aim of studying Zen is to see your own nature. Where at this moment is your own nature?
2. When you understand your own nature, you are free from life and death. How do you free yourself when your eyesight is failing?
3. When you are free from life and death you know where

to go. Where do you go when the elements (of your body) are scattered?

*Mumon's comment:* Whoever finds the turning words in answer to these three questions will be self-possessed wherever he may be and will have Zen whatever happens. If he cannot do so (he should remember that) food hurriedly eaten fills the stomach easily, but when well chewed keeps hunger away.

*Numberless kalpas are reduced to one moment,  
Numberless things happen this very second.  
When you grasp this moment  
You also grasp the grasper of it.*

## 48

## KEMPŌ'S WAY

The Master Kempō was once asked by a monk: '(The sūtra states that) the ten quarters (of the world) are filled by the Buddha and (that) there is one way to nirvāṇa. I wonder where the way is?'

Kempō drew a line in the air with his stick, saying, 'Here it is.'

Many years later Ummon was asked the same question by a monk. Happening to have a fan in his hand, Ummon said: 'My fan has flown to the thirty-third heaven and hit king Śakra Devānam Indra on the nose. When the carp of the eastern sea is being beaten with a pole it makes the rain fall as if a bowl (of water) had been overturned.'

*Mumon's comment:* One man went to the bottom of the deep sea and winnowed (dust from) the mud, while another stood on

a high peak and made waves by kicking the sky. Each contributed to the cause of Zen by using one hand in holding or letting go. They are like two runners who happen to meet. There does not seem to be one true man (of understanding) in the world. When I look closely into it, neither of the two masters seems to have understood the way.

*The goal is reached before the first step is taken,  
The talk is over before a word has been said.  
Even if you know how to take the first step  
Remember that there is another way up the mountain.*



## EPILOGUE

These stories of the teaching given by the Buddha and the Fathers are based on the records of what occurred. From start (to finish) nothing idle has been included. I have done my best, turning my skull inside out and causing my eyes to start from my head. I hope, therefore, that students will understand (the kōans) directly and will not copy others when seeking (to solve them). Those who are well informed and superior will see where the stories end, even when only their beginnings are given. There is, after all, no gate to go through, no steps to climb (to Zen enlightenment). Go straight through the barriers and no sentry will call you back. Have you not heard Gensa's saying, 'No gate is the gate to emancipation and no-mund is the mind of a man of Tao'? Have you not heard of Hakuun's saying: 'Tao is most clear. It is this. Why do you not pass through?'

These stories are (as tedious) as milk smeared on the red soil. Those who have passed through the *Mu Mon Kwan* will laugh at Mumon. Those who cannot pass through the *Mu Mon Kwan* are spiritless. It is easy to understand what is called the *nirvāṇa* mind (non-discriminative thinking), but it is difficult to understand discriminative thinking. When that is understood the State will automatically be at peace.

July 10. Jyōtei 1 (1228)  
Bhikshu Mumon Ekai.



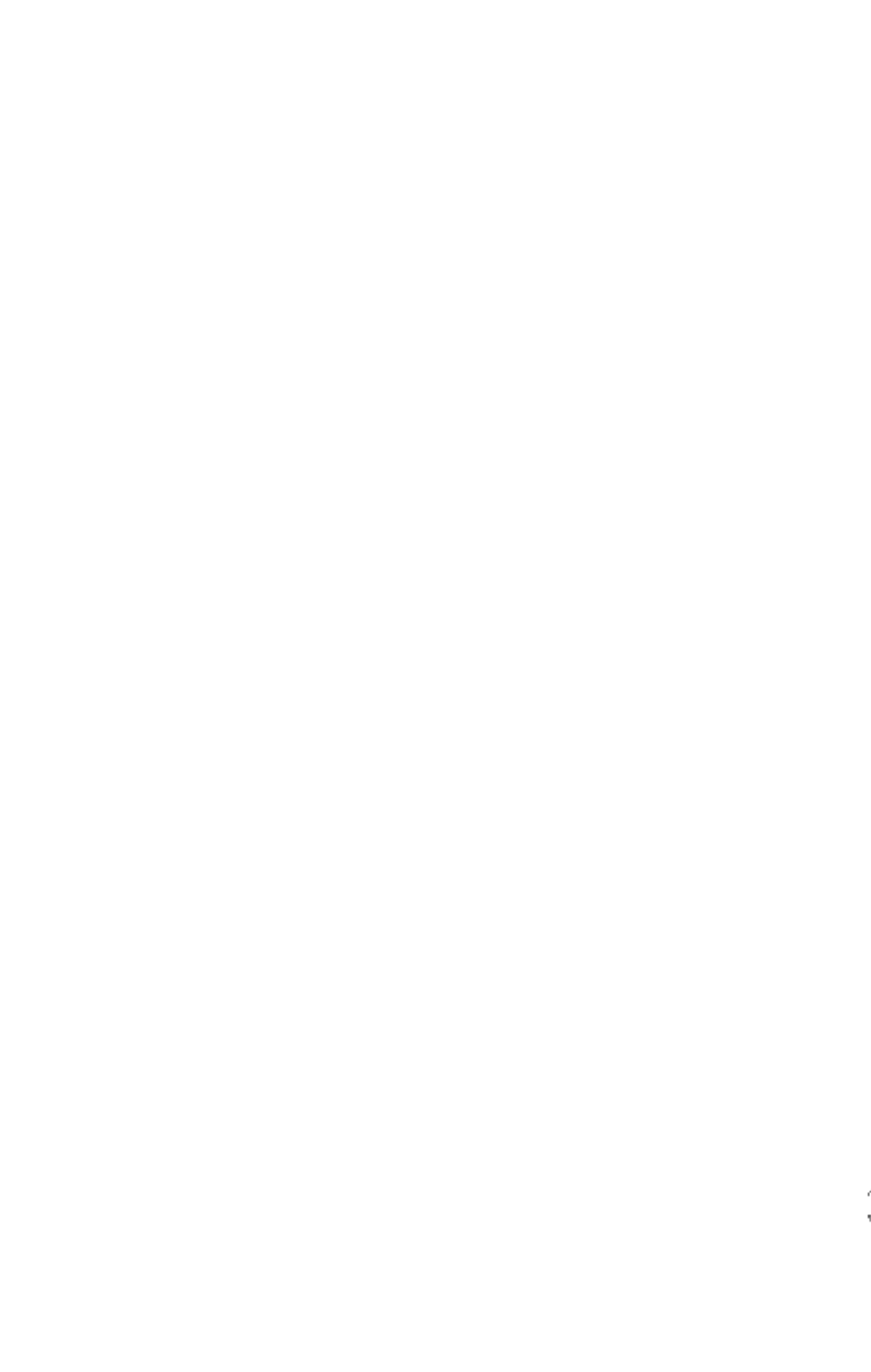


Appendix II

THE TAO TÊ CHING

LAO TSU

A Zen Interpretation by  
SOHAKU OGATA



## A ZEN INTERPRETATION OF THE TAO TÊ CHING

### I

The Tao that can be defined is not the everlasting Tao, the name that can be named is not the everlasting name. The unnameable is the origin of heaven and earth, the nameable is the mother of all things.

Therefore the enigma can be grasped through mindlessness and the bounds (of things) seen through mindfulness.

These two states of mind have come from the same source but differ in name. They are both mysterious, the very essence of mystery, whence all mysteries have come.

### 2

All men under heaven think something beautiful, but it is ugly (as well). All men think something good, but it is (also) bad. And so being and not-being, the difficult and the easy, the long and the short, the high and the low are relative, as also are the harmony of sound and the order of things.

Therefore the sage rules the world by non-action and preaches non-speaking. He lives in perfect accord with the Tao from which all things derive. The sage who is the Tao creates all things but does not possess them, he works for them but does not depend on them, he completes the work but claims no credit for himself. But he is always given credit because he does not claim it.

### 3

When talents are not esteemed men stop competing with each other. When rare things are not treasured people do not

steal. And when desirable things are not on show men do not get confused.

Therefore the sage rules by guiding people to be humble in heart and unambitious, to fill their bellies and to be strong in body. He always keeps them ignorant and desireless and never allows intellectuals to stir them to action. When non-action is the rule, no one is out of control.

## 4

The Tao is without content, but its utility cannot be exhausted. It is so profound that it is the source of all things.

The man of Tao blunts the sharpness of his mind, unravels complications, dims the brightness of his personality and shares the dust with common people. I do not know whose son he is. He must be the ancestor of the gods.

## 5

Heaven and earth are not benevolent, they regard all things as straw dogs (sacrificial offerings). And so it is with the sage.

The space between heaven and earth is like a pair of bellows. It contains nothing solid, yet it never collapses. The more it is worked the more draught it makes.

Much talking leads to exhaustion, it is far better to observe the golden mean.

## 6

The valley spirit does not die. It is like the mysterious female from whom heaven and earth sprang. It is imperceptible, yet its utility cannot be exhausted.

## 7

Heaven is everlasting and earth eternal because they exist without consciousness of self. Thus they endure for ever.

And so the sage puts himself last, yet others place him first. By being unselfish he completes his personality.

## 8

The way of a supreme man is like water which helps all things without effort. Content to keep that which the multitude hates he is close to the Tao. He adapts himself to any environment, attunes his mind to what is deep and associates with the virtuous: his words inspire confidence, his rule brings order, his ability settles affairs and his actions are always timely. Since he strives with no one he is never accused.

## 9

If you place a valuable vase on show you lose it. If you are always sharpening a weapon you will not keep it long. And when a house is full of gold and jade it is never secure.

If a man is wealthy, honourable and boastful he invites trouble. For the way of heaven is to withdraw when success has been won.

## 10

When the spirit clings to the body there is no disunion. When one embraces softness with all one's heart one becomes like a child. When a man purifies his mind he is free from blemish. When the ruler loves people truly he rules without

effort. When the sexual organs are properly used one remains inactive. And when the intellect is properly used one is well informed.

The Tao forms and fosters all things without the desire for ownership, the wish for any return or the claim of lordship. It is called the mysterious virtue.

## II

Thirty spokes spring from a hub, yet the axle hole is essential to the usefulness of the wheel. Clay is moulded into vessels, yet the hollow parts are essential to the usefulness of the vessels. Doors and windows are spaced in the walls of a house for the same reason. Forms therefore are useful because of their formlessness.

## 12

The five colours blind the eye, the five tones deafen the ear and the five flavours vitiate the palate of a man. Racing and hunting derange his mind and goods hard to obtain affect his conduct.

Therefore the sage is concerned with the belly and not with the eye. He looks after the one and neglects the other.

## 13

Honour and disgrace cause excitement and people treat great disaster as they treat their bodies.

What is meant by saying that honour and disgrace cause excitement? People prefer honour to disgrace, yet they are as excited when they have the one as when they lose the other.

What is meant by saying that people treat great disaster as they treat their bodies? Great disaster comes to them because they are conscious of their bodies. When they are not so conscious, what disaster can bother them?

Therefore a man who at the risk of his body strives for or loves the whole world can be entrusted with the whole world.

## 14

The invisible is called colourless, the inaudible boundless and the untouchable formless. These three cannot be examined in detail because they form an indivisible whole.

This whole is not bright at the summit or dark at the base. Ceaseless in action it is indescribable, always returning to nothingness. Being without form or shape it is called vagueness. Facing it a man does not see its head, nor its tail when he follows it. Abiding in this ancient Truth he rules modern states. To see the origin of the ancient rules is to understand the principles of the Tao.

## 15

In days of old the skilful masters of the Tao were subtly and exquisitely steeped in the mystery of the Tao. They were indeed unfathomably deep, so how can we describe them? They moved cautiously as men fording a stream in winter, they acted hesitantly like people shy of their neighbours, and they behaved reverently as men do when they meet honoured guests. They adapted themselves to any event as quickly as ice melts before fire. Their manners were as simple and artless as unhewn wood, their minds were as wide as a valley and their views as impartial as muddy water.



Who can purify muddy water by keeping quiet for a while?  
Who can recreate himself by perpetuating peace?

Those who cling to the Tao do not want satiation. Because they have never been satiated they do not decay and need no reviving.

## 16

When one is completely egoless and abides in the state of extreme stillness, one can see all things going through the cycle of changes and returning to their original state.

Things grow in various ways, but they all return to the common source. This returning to the source is what is meant by the state of stillness, and that stillness means that things have reached their appointed end.

That fulfilment is complete: to know it is called enlightenment, while to ignore it leads to wild actions and evil results.

Knowing this law one becomes broadminded and so impartial. Being impartial one acts like a king and so can be as if in heaven, then being in heaven one possesses the Tao. A possessor of the Tao lasts long and escapes all danger till the end of his days.

## 17

Under the supreme ruler people are unaware of his existence with the next type of ruler they feel intimate and praise him: of the next they are afraid and on the lowest type they look down. Therefore when the ruler fails to inspire confidence, people distrust him.

In old days rulers were irresolute in speechmaking so that their successes and achievements were always attributed to natural causes.

When the great Tao is forgotten, benevolence and righteousness become fashionable, and filial piety when the family is in disharmony. And when royal ministers become fashionable chaos reigns in the realm.

When wisdom is renounced and wit discarded people benefit an hundredfold. When benevolence ceases and obligations are forgotten people become filial and kindly. And when artificiality is given up and profits are thrown away, thieves and robbers disappear.

These six things look good on the surface but lack reality. Therefore it is better to let people be independent, cherish simplicity and honesty, be less selfish and have fewer desires.

If learning is renounced a man is free from trouble. What then is the difference between the polite 'yes' and the frank 'yea', or between what is called good and what is called bad?

One should detest what others detest; but how wide is the range of questions for discussion!

Everyone seems to be as busy and merry as if at a religious festival or on picnic in the spring. I alone remain quiet and indifferent. I am like an infant who has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn as if I had no home.

All seem to have enough and to spare, I alone to have an insufficiency. I seem to be stupid and in a state of chaos.

Ordinary men seem bright and intelligent, but I alone to be in a fog. They appear well informed about everything, but I

alone to be dim. I am like someone tossed on the wide sea or blown about in a gale.

All appear to have their spheres of action, but I alone to be a dour peasant. I am no different from others, yet I value the Tao, the mother who nurses all.

## 21

What form does the great Virtue (Tê) take? It is identical with the Tao which is vague and intangible. Though vague and intangible there is a vital principle and form within it: though distant and empty there is essence therein. This essence is real and one can prove it. From time out of mind its name has been known. It is the primary source of all beginning. How do I know this? By the nature of the Tao.

## 22

Meandering leads to perfection, the crooked becomes straight, the empty full and the worn out new. He whose desires are few achieves them, he whose desires are many goes astray.

Therefore the sage holds the One and becomes the model for the whole world. He is free from self-display and so shines, from self-assertion and so is distinguished, from self-boasting and so his merit is acknowledged, from self-complacency and so he acquires superiority. Because he never strives with any one, no one strives with him.

How true is the old saying, 'Meandering leads to perfection'! All real completion is reached through meandering.

## 23

To be silent is to be natural. Violent wind does not last the whole morning, nor sudden wind the whole day. What causes

them? Heaven and earth, but even they cannot make their works last for ever. How much less can the works of men?

Therefore those who practise the Tao identify themselves with the Tao, they agree with men of Tao and with the virtuous and the faulty when they meet them.

Men of Tao enjoy meeting each other, as do the virtuous and the faulty. Those who lack faith are never believed by others.

## 24

If you stand on tiptoe you cannot stand firm. If you take long strides you cannot travel far. And if you show off you can never shine. Self-asserters are never distinguished, self-boasters accumulate no merit, and the self-complacent never acquire superiority.

Men of Tao say, 'A surplus of food and rich clothing cause envy in others.' Therefore men of Tao do not allow them.

## 25

Something evolved from chaos existed before heaven and earth. It is without sound or substance, is independent and immutable, all-pervading without undermining anything. Think of it as the mother of the universe.

I do not know its name but call it Tao. Forced to describe it I would call it Great. The Great flows constantly and is therefore far-reaching, which means that it returns to its source.

Therefore Tao is great, as are heaven, earth and the king, the bearer of Tao. There are four great ones in the universe and the king with Tao is one of them. He follows the law of earth, the earth that of heaven, the heaven that of Tao and Tao follows the law of Nature.

Weight supports lightness, stillness rules movement. Therefore the sage, marching (with his army) the whole day never goes far from his baggage. However magnificent the view he remains quietly indifferent to it. Should the lord of a myriad chariots behave lightly? If so, he loses the support of his people.

Good actions leave no traces and good words no room for criticism. Good reckoners need no abacus. A skilful closer needs no bolts or bars, yet no one can open what he has shut. A skilful binder needs no cords, yet no one can release what he has bound.

Therefore the sage saves men skilfully and neglects no one. He saves things skilfully and wastes nothing. This is called all-embracing intelligence.

Thus a good man is the master of bad men, who in their turn succeed him. However intelligent a man may be, if he neither esteems his master nor loves his successors, he will be puzzled by many things. This is called the great mystery.

Whoever is aware of his manly strength, yet stays meek as a woman, becomes like a valley. Virtue is then always with him and like a new-born babe he is free from strain.

Whoever is aware of his purity without spurning impurity becomes the model of humility for the world, so that virtue is always in him and he returns to the beginningless beginning.

Whoever is aware of his glory while content with disgrace becomes like a valley, so that virtue always fills him and he

returns to the state of original simplicity. But this state of simplicity must be destroyed before a useful vessel can be formed. Therefore the sage becomes the supreme ruler without losing his quality. And so, though control is great, human nature is not violated.

## 29

He who would take the kingdom by action will never win it, for the kingdom is a sacred vessel that may not be so handled. It is destroyed by action and lost when grasped.

People in general are always changing. they lead then follow, breathe in then out, are strong then weak, rise and then fall. The sage therefore avoids excess, extravagance and superfluity.

## 30

If you want to advise the ruler in accordance with the Tao, you will not encourage him to strengthen the country by force, for that would meet with its proper desert. Briars and thorns grow where a large army is stationed, and big battles are followed inevitably by years of dearth.

Therefore a good general stops the fighting after striking a decisive blow and never tries to win supremacy by following up a victory. He is careful not to be proud of his success, nor to boast of his victory; not to live arrogantly nor be aggressive to the defeated, and not to harm the weak.

When things have matured fully they become old. You may think that this is contrary to the Tao, but those who oppose the Tao soon perish.

Weapons however fine are ill-omened and hateful, so men of Tao have nothing to do with them. Therefore the superior man considers the left side as the place of honour in peace, but in war the right side.

Weapons are implements of disaster, not tools for the superior man, who only uses them as a last resort. He esteems calm and repose, not victory by force. Whoever wants victory enjoys slaughtering men and will never impose his will on the kingdom.

Therefore on festive occasions seats on the left are counted honourable, but those on the right in times of mourning. And so the second in command of an army has his place on the left, and the commander-in-chief on the right. This shows that war should be looked upon as a cause for mourning, the slaughter of many people as an occasion for bitter grief, and even a victory as a cause of lamentation.

The Tao has no constant name. Though a man be mean, no one can subjugate him as long as he retains his primordial simplicity. When a feudal lord remains simple all spontaneously submit to him.

When heaven and earth are at one with the Tao sweet dew falls and all benefit alike without asking.

When a name is given to the Tao, men are bound by it. But when they know the limit of name they are free from danger. The Tao is to all things what the ocean is to streams.

It is wisdom to know others, but enlightenment to know oneself. The conqueror of men is powerful, but the master of

himself is mightier still. A man content with his lot is rich and if he acts with energy he develops a strong will. He endures by staying in his place, and if his reputation survives his death he is immortal.

## 34

The great Tao pervades all and is found everywhere. All things are born of it. It refuses nothing and claims no merit for what it does. It clothes all but will not be their lord.

Ever without desire it may be called small: being the bourn of all without being their lord, it may be called great. And so the sage can do great things by being unconscious of his greatness.

## 35

The sage roams the world with the huge form of the formless Tao. Harmless he brings people rest, peace and a feeling of ease.

Music and good food will make the passing guests stop for a time. But the Tao, when declared, seems thin and flavourless. It is nothing to look at and nothing to hear, but when used it cannot be exhausted.

## 36

What is to be shrunk must first be stretched, what is to be weakened must first be strengthened and what is to be felled must first be set up. He who would take must first give. This is called 'dimming the light'.

The weak can overcome the strong and the soft the hard. Fish should be left in the sea and sharp weapons of state should not be shown to others.



The Tao is ever inactive, yet it leaves nothing undone. If rulers possess it, they influence all things naturally. Rulers, when people become selfish under them, should calm the people with the nameless simplicity that is Tao. This simplicity is free from all desire, even from that of being quiet. And so the world settles down naturally and is at peace.

A man of the greatest virtue is not conscious of it and so is virtuous. A man of the smallest virtue is afraid of losing it and so fails to be virtuous. The one does nothing of a purpose and nothing is left undone: the other is always actively employed and much is left undone.

When benevolence is most highly esteemed people practise it for its own sake, when righteousness for its own good, and when propriety because they are forced to do so. Thus when Tao is lost virtue is esteemed, when virtue is lost benevolence and then in turn righteousness and finally propriety are esteemed.

Now propriety is caused by lack of loyalty and sincerity and this is the beginning of disorder. Learned men are mere flowers of the Tao and so but originators of folly. Therefore truly great men dwell in the deeps and shun the shallow. Abiding in what is real they decry the ornamental.

In olden time these things obtained the One: heaven and it was purified, earth and it became secure, spirits and they became divine, valleys and they were filled. All things arise

from the One and by it rulers become the models for their kingdoms.

Without it heaven would be torn open, earth insecure and spirits impotent. Without it valleys would dry up, all things would perish and rulers would fail to rule.

Verily the mighty grow from humble roots and the high is supported by the low. Hence kings call themselves 'orphans', 'men of small virtue' and 'wheels without hubs'. Surely this shows that for them humility is of the greatest importance?

If concerned with praise you are not worthy of it. You should look coarse like a stone and not elegant like jade.

## 40

The movement of Tao is returning, the quality of Tao is weakness. All things under heaven have come from being, and being from not-being.

## 41

A man of great ability hearing of the Tao puts it into practice. A man of mediocre ability takes it up one minute and loses it the next, while a man of little ability laughs loudly. If he did not laugh it would not be worthy of the name of Tao.

Therefore the proverb, 'Whoever thoroughly understands the Tao appears to be in the dark, whoever walks down a smooth road looks as if he were retreating, while whoever finds the path easy seems to have difficulty in following it.'

The most virtuous man is broadminded like a valley, the purest is unconscious of his purity, the sturdiest appears weak and the most stolid to be shifty.

The greatest space has no corners, the largest ship is completed slowly, the highest note is inaudible, the biggest figure is formless and the Tao has no name. It lies hid and achieves all.

Tao begot the One, the One the Three and the Three everything. All things keep the balance between male and female, so maintaining harmony in the universe.

Men dislike being orphans, having little virtue and being wheels without hubs. But these are just what kings call themselves. As a rule, therefore, things are increased by being diminished and diminished by being increased.

Like other men I teach that the strong and the violent will not die a natural death. Such is the main theme of my teaching.

The softest thing overcomes the hardest. Not-being penetrates everything so that I realize how not-being has its advantages. There are few things which can be compared with teaching without words and with the advantages of not-doing.

Which is more precious, fame or life, which more important, life or property, which more preferable, gain or loss?

A man who loves things greatly has to spend largely, who possesses much has to lose more. He who knows how to be content will be free from disgrace, and he who knows where to stop will be free from danger. Such a man may enjoy a long life.

What is most perfect may seem defective, yet its use is inexhaustible. What is more complete may seem void, but its use will never fail. What is straightest may appear crooked, the most skilful seem clumsy and the most eloquent awkward.

Calm overcomes unrest, heat banishes cold, and purity and stillness rectify the world.

## 46

When Tao rules the world chariot horses work on the farm. When Tao fails to rule cart-horses are used in war and are bred below the city walls.

No sin is greater than that of having desires, no disaster is greater than the feeling of disappointment and no fault than the desire for gain. Truly the contented man is always satisfied.

## 47

Without leaving the front door one can see all that goes on in the world, and without looking out of the window one can see the way of heaven. For the further you get out of yourself the less you know yourself.

Therefore the sage acquires wisdom without travelling, understands without seeing and succeeds without effort.

## 48

Learning consists in adding to one's stock of knowledge day by day. The practice of Tao consists in diminishing that stock daily. By this gradual cancelling out of knowledge the state of inaction is reached when nothing is left undone.

Therefore an empire can be won by inaction. Whoever needs to act in order to win it is not worthy of it.

## 49

The sage has no mind of his own, so he uses the people's mind. He treats the good and the not-good alike because

human nature is good. He is sincere alike with the honest and the dishonest because it is human nature to be so.

When the sage rules the world he is impartial to all. The people watch him and listen to him, and he treats them all as if they were his own children.

## 50

Men emerge to live and enter to die. Of every ten three are wedded to life, three to death and three have already begun to decay. Why? Because they strive too hard to prolong life.

It is said that a man with a good hold on life avoids wild animals when travelling and wounds when fighting. Wild animals then find nothing for their claws to tear or soldiers for their weapons to pierce. Why? Because death does not dwell in such a man.

## 51

Tao produces all things and its Virtue brings them up. Each is formed after its own kind and is perfected by condition and circumstance. Therefore all things honour the Tao and its Virtue, and this honouring means more than ordination and is always spontaneous.

Thus it is said that Tao produces all things and its Virtue matures them. Although it nourishes, brings up, matures and protects all things, it makes no claim to possess them or to become their lord. This is called its mysterious way of working.

## 52

That which was the origin of the world may be called the mother of the world. Whoever knows the mother of all things

well, also knows her children. Whoever knows how children should behave and how their mother should be cared for, will be free from all danger to the end of his days.

Stop up your senses, close the doors of your mind, and you will be free from all danger to the end of your days. If you give rein to your senses and gratify your desires you will not be saved until the end of your days.

A man of insight sees through the very small and a man of strength stores up softness. Whoever follows his inner light and is bathed once more in the original brightness will be free from disaster to the end of his days. This is called the preservation of insight.

## 53

If I were suddenly to become known and were allowed to reorganize the government in accordance with the great Tao, I should be most careful not to allow establishments. The great Tao is very level and easy to follow, but people will wander down bypaths.

If the royal court is well kept, the rice fields will be ill cultivated and the granaries empty. If officials are well dressed and tired of good food and drink, they have stolen from the people, and this is not in accordance with Tao.

## 54

A well-established man cannot be uprooted, nor can one who holds fast be loosened. His descendants will offer sacrifices without cease at his shrine.

When an individual practises the Tao his conduct becomes sincere. When a family practises it, the influence of its Virtue becomes abundant, when a village that influence lasts, when a

state it becomes strong and when an empire practises the Tao the influence of its Virtue becomes universal.

Therefore one can see others in oneself, other families, villages, states and empires in one's own. How do I know that the world is like this? By this.

## 55

A man full of the Virtue of the Tao is like a child. Poisonous insects will not sting him, wild beasts will not seize and birds of prey will not tear him. A child's bones are weak and soft, but its grasp is firm. He knows nothing of the union of male and female, yet his male organ can be excited, so showing the perfection of his vitality. He can cry all day without becoming hoarse, so showing the harmony of his constitution.

If you can keep up this harmony, you achieve constancy and constancy leads to enlightenment. A full life leads to disaster and self-straining to violence. When things become strong they already begin to age. All this is contrary to Tao, and whatever is against Tao will soon perish.

## 56

Those who know Tao do not speak about it; those who speak about it do not know it. Shut the mouth, close the doors of the senses, blunt sharpness of manner, unravel complications, dim the light of your dignity and share the dust with common people. Then there is great harmony.

A man who cannot be moved by affection or estrangement, gain or loss, and honour or disgrace is the noblest creature under heaven.

A state is ruled by right, a war is won with a sudden attack, and an empire is controlled by letting alone. How do I know this? By this:

In a kingdom the more prohibitions there are, the poorer the people will be; the more weapons there are, the more chaotic the state becomes; the cleverer men get, the more exotic goods are produced; and the more laws there are, the more thieves and robbers there will be.

Therefore the sage said, 'As long as I do nothing, people reform themselves; while I enjoy stillness, people keep the law; while I take no trouble about it, people of themselves become prosperous; and while I am without desires people remain in the state of primitive simplicity.

When the government is tolerant, people are honest, but when it interferes they are cunning.

Good and evil are neighbours, but who knows the ultimate end? There is no absolute right or wrong for right may turn into wrong and good into evil. Surely mankind has been deluded long enough?

Therefore the sage is strict without accusing and honest without hurting others. He is upright without condemning, and glorious without dazzling other men.

Moderation is the best way to rule men and serve heaven. It is the shortest cut by which a man can return to his original state. This return is what is called the repeated accumulation of virtue.



When virtue has thus been accumulated, a man can overcome all the obstacles which prevent him from living in Tao. He then sees no limit for himself and so can rule a state.

The mother who maintains the state lives long, since, when the root is deep, a plant has a long life.

## 60

Governing a large state is as easy as cooking small fish. When a state is ruled with the Tao, spirits, gods and sages become powerless to harm people. When sages and gods do not harm each other their influence helps people to return to their original nature.

## 61

A great state should be like the lower reaches of a river in which all the smaller streams have mingled. It should be like the great female of the world. The female always overcomes the male with stillness, and stillness is the attribute of humility.

Therefore, by being humble a large state may absorb small states and these, by being humble, may be embraced by a large one. Thus in the one case abasement brings adherence and in the other favour.

The great state only wishes to unite and nourish men, while a small one only wants to be accepted by and serve the other. Both are willing to get what they want, but the great state must learn how to be humble.

## 62

All things abide in the Tao. It is treasured by good and preserved by bad people. Fine words can be sold in the market,

and good manners shown to anyone. Why then should bad men be rejected by the Tao?

Therefore when the king is proclaimed and his three ministers appointed, a royal messenger who brings precious jade in a fine carriage pulled by four horses is no better than a man discoursing on the Tao in a chair in the living-room.

Why then did men of old esteem the Tao so much? Because by it the needy obtain what is needed and the guilty escape accusation. Hence all men under heaven valued the Tao above everything.

## 63

Live without being conscious of living and work without being conscious of working, relish the tasteless, regard the small as the great, and reward injury with kindness.

Deal with the difficult while it is easy and settle great affairs while they are still small. What was difficult was once easy, and what was serious simple. Therefore the sage does great things without attempting to do anything great.

A light assent inspires little confidence and an easy promise leads to many difficulties. Hence even the sage takes easy things hardly and is free from hardship till the end of his days.

## 64

What is still is easy to hold and what has not yet appeared is easily kept down. The brittle is easily broken and fine dust is easy to disperse. Deal with things before they take place and put them in order before they get into confusion.

The tree, big as a man's embrace, grew from a tiny sapling; the tower nine storeys high rose from a small heap of earth; and the journey of a thousand miles began with a single step.

He who acts purposefully fails, and he who grabs, loses. The

sage refrains from doing and does not fail. Holding nothing he loses nothing. People often fail at their work when within an ace of completing it. If they were as careful at the end as they were at the beginning, they would not make such a mess of things.

Therefore the sage wishes to be desireless, sets no store by what is difficult to get, learns what others do not learn, and turns back to what most people have passed by. Thus he helps the natural development of all things and does not dare to act purposefully.

## 65

In days of old those who practised the Tao well did not help people to become clever, but encouraged them to remain simple and ignorant. Cleverness is why people are difficult to rule. He who tries to rule with knowledge brings trouble, but if with wisdom, good fortune to the state.

Whoever knows this knows how to rule people. Knowing how, he is called a man of profound virtue. Such a man is deep and far-reaching. Not being against anything he conforms to the Tao.

## 66

Rivers and seas are like kings to valley streams because they are lower than they. Therefore the sage, wishing to be above people, must speak as though he were beneath them and, wishing to be in front, must put himself behind.

Only thus can the sage be on top without the people feeling his weight, or sit in the front without their feeling injured.

All men under heaven delight in praising him and are never tired of him, because he never strives with anyone and no one competes with him.

All men under heaven say that my Tao is too great and that nothing compares with it. Were it like something, it would long ago have been lost because of its smallness.

I have three treasures which I prize and hold fast. The first is compassion, the second frugality and the third humility. Compassion makes me brave and frugality profuse, while humility enables me to become the chief minister of state. But if my bravery is not based on compassion, my frugality on profusion, and my chief ministership on humility, then I must die.

In attack compassion wins the day and in defence it guards one well. Heaven arms with compassion those it would save.

A good soldier is not warlike, a good fighter is not impatient, nor is a good winner quarrelsome. A good ruler of men is humble. He is called 'virtuous' because he does not contend, 'strong' because he uses other men, and 'in tune with heaven'. He stands on the peak of the ancient way.

A master of the art of war said: 'I would sooner be the host than the guest when war is declared. I would rather retire a foot than advance an inch.' In other words have no men to march, no arm to bare, no enemy to fight and no weapon to wield.

No calamity is greater in war than underestimating the enemy. One does so at the risk of losing one's treasure. When the battle is joined he who deplores it will win.

## 70

My words are very easy to understand and to put into practice, yet no one under heaven understands or practises them

My words have a source and my deeds authority. Since, however, people do not understand my words, they do not understand me. Those who do so are few, so that I am the more prized. This is why the sage wears hair cloth of poor quality with his jade seal underneath.

## 71

To know without thinking one knows is best. Not to know but to think one knows is a disease. If you know when you are ill you are free from disease. The sage is free from sickness because he knows he is sick.

## 72

When people are afraid of authority a Mightier Authority will deal with them. Do not live in a room that is too cramped, and do not tire of where you live. If you do not tire of life, you will not be tired by others.

Therefore the sage knows his own worth, but does not show off. He loves himself, but does not feel that he is important. He puts away pride and is content.

## 73

The brave man is killed while the coward lives. This is profitable to the one and harmful to the other, but which

does heaven hate? Who can tell the cause? Even the sage finds it difficult to know.

## 74

When people are not afraid of death, how can they be frightened by capital punishment? If they are always afraid of death, and if all wrong-doers are arrested and killed, who will dare to do wrong?

There is always someone to play the part of executioner. He is like an apprentice who cuts wood in the master-carpenter's place, and seldom avoids cutting his own hand.

## 75

The people starve because their superiors tax them too heavily. They are hard to govern because their superiors have too much to do.

People make light of dying because the burden of making a living is too heavy. Those who do not bother with mere living are wiser than those who consider it important.

## 76

At birth man is soft and weak, but at death he is hard and strong. So it is with all things. Trees and plants in their early growth are soft and supple, at their death they are dry and withered.

Therefore to be hard and strong is the way of death, but to be soft and weak is the way of life. Hence he who relies on his strength does not conquer and a tree which is strong will break.

Truly the strong and big are cast down while the soft and weak are set on high.

## 77

The way of heaven is like the drawing of a bow. When the top part of the bow is pulled down, the lower part is pulled up. So too does heaven take from those who have too much and give to those who do not have enough.

This is the way of heaven, but not the way of man, who robs the poor to serve the rich.

Who then can serve all under heaven with his stored abundance? Only the man of Tao. Therefore, the sage acts without wish for return and achieves his aim without claiming any credit. He is not concerned with showing his worth.

## 78

Nothing in the world is softer or weaker than water. Yet when it attacks things that are hard and strong they cannot withstand it. Nothing can replace it.

All know that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong. Yet no one puts this principle into practice.

Hence the sage said, 'Only one who suffers shame for his state may be its master, and only one who suffers in himself when his state meets with disaster may be lord of the world.'

Straight words seem paradoxical.

## 79

There can be reconciliation after great hatred, but some of the hatred remains, so what good can be expected?

Therefore, the sage, while keeping the bond, does not

reproach those who were responsible. Men of virtue are concerned with their own obligations, but men of no virtue with blaming others. The way of heaven is impartial, yet it always sides with good men.

## 80

In a small state with few inhabitants I would teach the people not to use machines which are ten or a hundred times more productive than men; not to move far away to survive; not to go in boats and carriages though they are available; and not to use arms and weapons though they possess them.

I would let the people use knotted cords again instead of writing, appreciate coarse food, be satisfied with poor houses and be happy with their primitive customs.

Neighbouring states should be in sight of each other, so that when the cocks and dogs of each crow and bark, they may be heard in the other. Neither people should think of going abroad until the end of their days.

## 81

Sincere words are not fine and fine words are not sincere. Good men are not eloquent and eloquent men are not good. Wise men are not very learned and the very learned are not wise.

The sage does not store up knowledge for himself, but the more he gives to others the more he gets for himself.

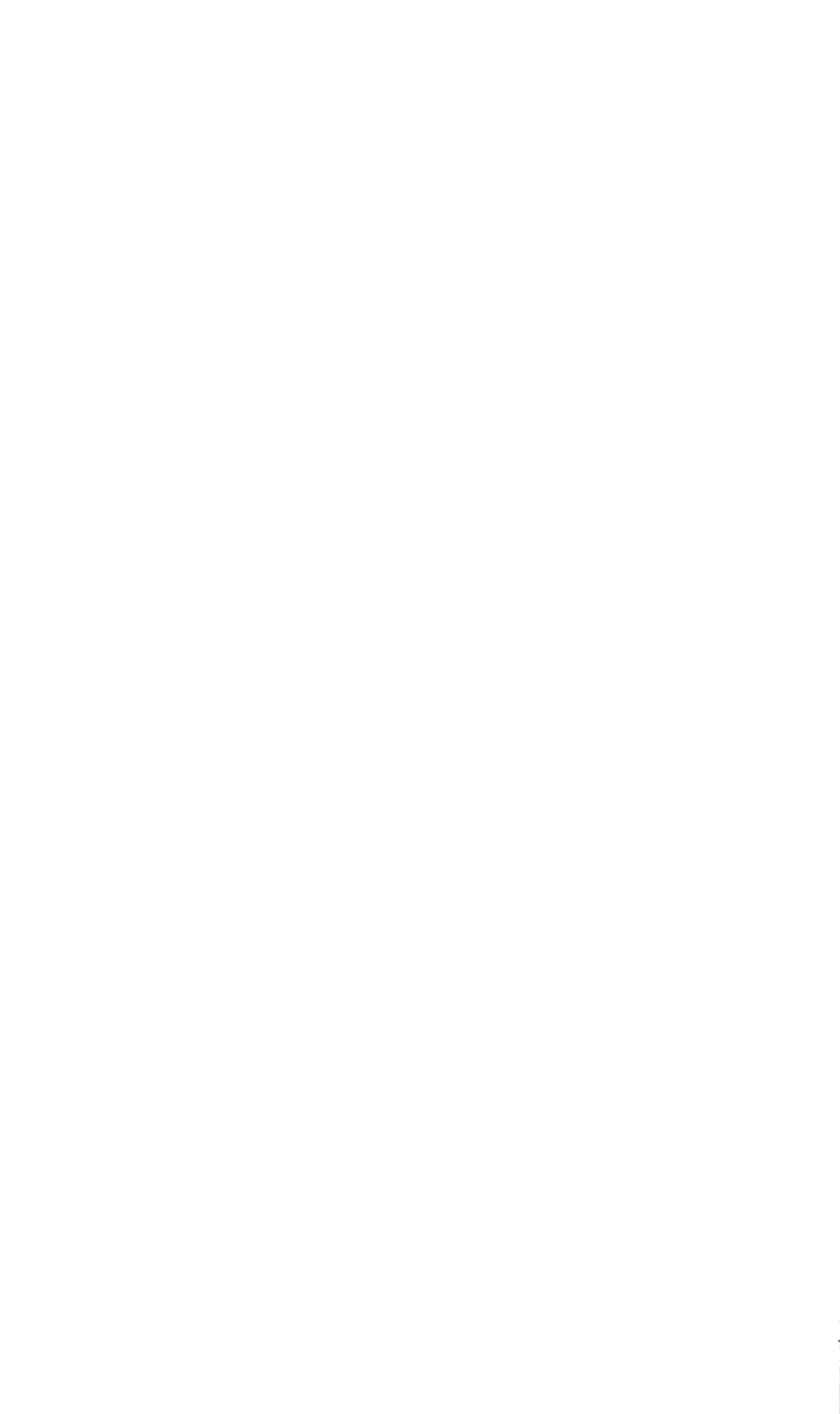
The way of heaven is to benefit and not to harm. The way of the sage is to serve, but not to strive.





## Appendix III

List of Chinese characters with Japanese and Chinese transliterations and dates of people, places and technical terms in *Zen for the West* and in the *Mu Mon Kwan*.



<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
芭蕉	Bashō	Pa-chiao	10th cent.
芭蕉	Bashō	Pa-chiao	1643-1694
馬祖	Baso	Ma-tzu	Died 788
長沙景岑	Chōsa Keishin	Ch'ang-sha-ching-ch'ên	9th cent.
張拙	Chōsetsu	Chang-cho	Died 1040
大梅	Daibai	Ta-mei	752-839
大慧	Daie	Ta-hui	1089-1163
大燈國師	Daitō Kokushi	Ta-têng-kuo-shih	1282-1337
大通智勝佛	Daitō Chishō Butsu	Ta-t'ung-chih shêng-fu	
大庾嶺	Daiyūrei	Ta-yü-ling	
慧忠	Echū	Hui-chung	Died 775
慧可	Eka	Hui-k'o	486-593
慧開	Eka1	Hui-k'ai	1143-1260
慧明	Emyō	Hui-ming	8th cent.
圓悟	Engo	Huan-wu	1063-1135
慧能	Enō	Hui-nêng	638-713
普巖斷岸	Fugan Dangan	Pōu-yen-tan-an	

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
風穴	Fuketsu	Fêng-hsiieh	896-973
汾陽善昭	Funyo Zenshō	Fên-yang-shan-chao	Died 1024
巖頭	Ganto	Yen-t'ou	828-887
玄沙	Gensa	Hsüan-sha	835-908
月庵	Getsuan	Yüeh-an	11th cent.
五位	goi	wu-wei	
言詮	gonsen	yen-ch'üan	
五祖	Goso	Wu-tzu	Died 1104
五台山	Gotaisan	Wu-t'ai-shan	
後土御門	Gotsuchimikado	Hou-t'u-yü-mên	Reigned 1464-1500
弘忍	Gunin	Hung-jên	605-675
俱胝	Gutei	Chü-chih	9th cent.
仰山	Gyozan	Yang-shan	814-890
俳句	haiku	p'ai-yu	
白隱	Hakuin	Po-yin	1685-1768
白雲	Hakuun	Po-yün	1025-1072
范丹	Hantan	Fan-tan	
碧巖錄	Hekiganroku	P'i-yen-lu	

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
偏中正	henchūshō	p'ien-chung-chêng	
久松眞一	Hisamatsu	Chiu-sung-chên-i	
法演	Hōen	Fa-yen	1063-1104
法眼	Hōgen	Fa-yen	885-958
報慈	Hoji	Pao-tzû	
本阿彌光悦	Honami Kōetsu	Pên-a-mi-kuang-shui	1558-1637
法身	hosshin	fa-shên	
華山	(Kwasan)	Hua-shan	
百丈	Hyakujyō	Pê-chang	720-814
慈懿	Jii	Tzu-i	Circa 1229
神秀	Jinshū	Shên-hsiu	Died 705
十重禁	jūjūkin	shih-chung-chin	
趙州	Jyōshū	Chao-chou	778-897
紹定	Jyōtei	Shao-ting	1228-1233
從悅	Jyūetsu	Ts'ung-yüeh	1044-1091
嘉	Ka	Chia	
加賀千代	Kaga-no-Chiyo	Chia-ho-ch'ien-tai	1707-1775

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
血脈論	Kechimyakuron	Hsüeh-mo-lun	
奚仲	Keichū	Hsi-chung	
警策	keisaku	chung-ts'e	
乾峯	Kempō	Kan-fēng	9th cent.
兼中至	kenchūshi	chien-chung- chih	
兼中到	kenchūtō	chien-chung-tao	
見性	kenshō	ching-hsing	
虛堂	Kidō	Hsü-t'ang	1185-1269
虛堂代別	Kidō-no- Daibetsu	Hsü-t'ang-tai- pieh	
希玄道元	Kigen-Dōgen	Hsi-hsuan-tao- yüan	1200-1253
機關	kan	chi-kuan	
紀貫之	Kinō-Tsurayuki	Chi-kuan-chih	Died 946
欽山	Kinzan	Ch'in-shan	
公案	kōan	kung-an	
項羽	Kōu	Hsiang-yü	3rd cent. B.C.
興陽	Kōyō	Hsiang-yang	
香嚴	Kyōgen	Hsiang-yen	9th cent.

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
老子		Lao-tsi	
末後牢關	matsugo-no-rōkan	mo-hao-lao-kuan	
彌衍宗紹	Mien Sōshō	Mi-yen-tsung-shao	13th cent.
明庵榮西	Minan Yōsai	Ming-an-yung-hsi	1141-1215
罔明	Mōmyō	Wang-ming	
無	mu	wu	
無學祖元	Mugaku-Sogen	Wu-hsueh-tsu-yüan	1226-1286
無門關	Mumonkwan	Wu-mên-kuan	
村上天皇	Murakami Tenno	Tsun-shang-tien-huang	Reigned 946-967
南嶽	Nangaku	Nan-yüeh	677-744
南泉	Nansen	Nan-ch'üan	748-834
難透難解	nantōnange	nan-tou-nan-chieh	
庭詰	nwazume	t'ien-chieh	
黃梅	Ōbai	Huang-mei	602-675
黃檗	Ōbaku	Huang-po	Died 850
鶯宿梅	ōshukubai	yin-su-mei	
太田道灌	Ōta Dōkan	Tai-tien-tao-kuan	Died 1486
蘭溪道隆	Rankei Dōryū	Lan-chi-tao-lung	1213-1278



<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
濃 州	Reishū	Li-chou	
臨 濟	Rinzai	Lan-chi	Died 867
臨濟錄	Rinzairoku	Lin-chi-lu	
臨濟宗	Rinzaishu	Lin-chi-tsung	
老 師	rōshi	lao-shih	
梁 楷	Ryōkai	Liang-k'ai	10th cent.
良 寬	Ryōkwan	Liang-k'uan	1758-1831
龍 翔	Ryūshō	Lung-hsiang	
龍 潭	Ryūtan	Lung-t'an	9th cent.
查 渡	Sado	Ch'a-tu	
作 務	samu	tso-wu	
參 禪	sanzen	ts'an-ch'an	
悟	satori	wu	
青 原	Seigen	Ch'ing-yüan	
清 讓	Seijyō	Ch'ing-jiang	10th cent.
倩 娘	Seirō	Ch'ien-niang	
清 稅	Seizei	Ch'ing-shui	10th cent.
石 霜	Sekisō	Shih-shuang	807-888
石 頭	Sekitō	Shih-t'ou	700-790

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
雪峯	Seppō	Hsüeh-fêng	822-908
攝心	sesshin	shê-hsin	
新到參堂	shuntō-sandō	hsin-tao-ts'an-t'ang	
死心	Shishin	Szu-hsin	1043-1115
正中偏	shōchūhen	chêng-chung-p'ien	
正中來	shōchūrai	chêng-chung-lai	
松源	Shōgen	Sung-yüan	Died 1209
相見	shōken	hsiang-chien	
清涼院	Shoryōin	Ch'ing-liang-yüan	
首山	Shuzan	Shou-shan	926-993
祖慶	Sokei	Tsōu-ching	Circa 1190
宗信	Sōshin	Ch'ung-hsin	9th cent.
祖師禪	Soshuzen	Tsu-shih-ch'an	
蘇東坡	Sotōba	Su-tung-p'o	1041-1101
曹洞宗	Sōtōshu	Ts'ao-tung-tsung	
曹山	Sōzan	Ts'ao-shan	840-901
大愚	Taigu	Ta-yü	9th cent.
托鉢	takuhatsu	t'o-po	

<i>Chinese character</i>	<i>Japanese transliteration</i>	<i>Chinese transliteration</i>	<i>Date</i>
旦過詰	tangazume	ch'ien-kuo-chueh	
道德經		Tao Tê Ching	
天龍	Tenryu	T'ien-lung	9th cent.
德山	Tokusan	Tê-shan	782-865
兜率	Tosotsu	Tou-shuai	
桃李	Tôsui	T'ao-shui	1606-1683
洞山	Tôzan	Tung-shan	10th cent.
雲門	Ummon	Yun-mên	Died 949
雲板	Umpan	yün-pan	
或庵	Wakuan	Huo-an	1108-1179
山吹	yamabuki	shan-ch'ui	
潯山	Yisan	Wei-shan	771-853
佑慈	Yuji	Yu-tz'u	
坐禪	zazen	tso-ch'an	
禪那	zen (skt. dyāna)	ch'an-na	
禪堂	zendō	ch'an-t'ang	
禪月	Zengetsu	Ch'an-yüeh	832-912
禪關	Zenkwan	Ch'an-kuan-	
進	Sakushin	ts'ê-chin	
瑞巖師	Zuigan Shigen	Shui-yen-shih-yen	9th cent.

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